

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
THURSDAY 7<sup>th</sup> MAY 2026**

7.00pm Calder Room, Whalley Old Grammar School  
Station Road, Whalley

*Minutes*

**1. Chairmans Welcome**

Cllr Highton welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming.

**2. Whalley Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report 2025-26**

I would like welcome everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting.

Whalley Parish Council is made up of 9 councillors. We have recently co-opted Tony Shaw to join us and fill the vacancy that we have had since last year.

Councillors are volunteers and receive no financial support for the many hours spent working for the village. It was an honour to be re-elected Chairman at last years A G M and I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their support throughout the year.

The council normally hold 11 monthly meetings plus the Annual and Precept meetings.

Planning meetings are normally held each month where any planning applications are considered and comments passed to R V B C, any objections can only be made on planning grounds. The proposed development off Accrington Road has now been approved on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate. A development off Clitheroe Road beyond Bramley Meade was submitted for decision in February but this has so far been refused by R V B C. We have also tried to ensure that R V B C enforces planning conditions on properties on the Mitton Road business park. I would like to thank our Chairman of Planning, Councillor John Threlfall for the many hours of preparation prior to these meetings

A major concern remains about anti-social behaviour which has included drug taking, drinking, general vandalism and verbal abuse when challenged. There have been numerous complaints received from several areas of the village. We hold regular meetings with the police and other interested parties to work towards resolution of these issues. We have been offered a grant to provide additional CCTV coverage of the area around the public toilets.

Some licensed properties have continued to be the centre of anti-social behaviour and we continue to receive complaints regarding their late night and early morning activities from residents. We are pleasantly surprised that the environmental health officer has at last submitted a request for a licence review to the licensing department at R V B C which may address the problem of noise in the early hours. The Cumulative Impact Assessment was renewed by R V B C and although it is of limited value it is the only means of controlling further licence applications. R V have installed a new CCTV camera to cover Accrington Road and Queen Street

Speeding continues to be an issue on several roads and there has been no success in obtaining enforcement from the Lancashire Safety Partnership. We have a rolling programme of deploying Spids at various locations on the major roads throughout the village with the help of Altham P C. The results have been downloaded from these

devices and we now have accurate details of the speed profile for these locations and an accurate count of passing vehicles whilst deployed.

We are continuing to press for an additional boundary sign on Wiswell Lane but so far without success!

Waste bin servicing remains a problem and we are disappointed that R V has not agreed to the introduction of a new scheme due to the lack of funding from central government.

Remembrance Day: we have continued to fund a road closure of King Street so that the traditional march from the Parish Church and the silence at 11am at the War Memorial can take place safely and respectfully. We have arranged to have the memorial steps re-pointed this year.

Churchyard: Whalley is a closed churchyard and is a major responsibility for the P C. The general maintenance contract has continued with Abbey Gardening Services and I am pleased with the continued improvement of the appearance of the churchyard. Trees and slippery paths continue to be a major problem and need constant attention. We still plan to flag a section of the path leading to the lower cemetery area subject to resources being available. We have had to remove a multi stemmed Sycamore from the internal corner with Back King Street that was causing failure of the perimeter wall which has now been re-built.

Grounds & Gardens: Abbey Gardening Services continue to make good progress enhancing the environment of the village in two roles, firstly as gardening contractors and also with the contract as lengthsman for the village.

We have installed a flagpole at the front of Vale Gardens and it will normally display the Union Flag.

We have installed a further 4 new benches this year, constructed by Ark Plastics from new cast iron ends in the standard style of the refurbished benches in Vale Gardens and replaced life expired benches. We will continue the bench programme by adding at least 4 more of this type this coming year.

We are using parish mapping software which identifies the location and condition of all our assets, I would like to thank Councillor Richard Vickers for his counting work on this project.

I would like to commend the work of the Whalley in Bloom volunteers throughout the village and wish to congratulate them on the awards received which included Gold in the small town category and Best Small Town. We were also successful in the Best Kept Village competition where we won the Urban Community category. I would also like to commend all the good work for the benefit of the community done by Whalley Lions, particularly the regular litter picking which improves the appearance of the village.

The Parish Council continues to use the large cedar tree as a permanent Christmas Tree for the village and together with the lamp standard decorations produce an impressive display. We will continue to arrange and fund the repairs, installation and removal of these Christmas Lights and hope to make a further addition to the display this year

QEII Playing Fields: We have recently engaged a transport consultant to prepare the relevant reports for the full planning application for the building of a community sports

hall. We must complete this planning application process before we can apply for funding. Whalley Parish Council is now the sole corporate trustee of the QEII playing fields trust. I would like to particularly commend Councillor Jon Smith for his work on the project.

Whalley, Wiswell and Barrow Cemetery, the Burial Committee is now a committee of W P C but still with representatives from Barrow P C and Wiswell P C. Meetings are held quarterly. This year we have created a further area for path side ashes interment and improved the site with new path side edging around the woodland section and creating a new area for planting at the front of the cemetery

We have appointed a new company to conduct our annual tree inspections at all sites that are the responsibility of the parish council and their recommendations will be followed by our tree surgeon. Adam Cottam Trust, the Almshouses remain in good condition and only require minor maintenance work. They continue to be a valuable provision for the village. I would like to particularly commend Councillor Cliff Ball for his work with the Almshouses trust.

Old Grammar School, we continue to support the Whalley Education Foundation trustees. This year this has involved funding the re-development of the Upper Garden Room

Concurrent Functions: I am pleased to report that R V has continued to support P C with a grant towards expenditure on the lengthsman, burial grounds and parks.

Grants were maintained at 5k this year, primarily made to local groups. The traditional method of determining the grant recipients in January has finished and the Parish Council will consider applications through the financial year.

The Website continues to be the main source of information on the P C and continues to receive compliments on its appearance and functionality.

Further policy and governance documents have been reviewed and updated this year  
We have appointed a staffing committee

I would like to thank our Clerk, Liz Haworth for the excellent contribution that she is making to the Parish Council and the support that she has given to me and the council throughout the year.

Issues going forward;

Flood Mitigation Measures, we are pleased that the Environmental Agency have reconsidered the funding of flood protection measures for Whalley and look forward to seeing the plans.

Car Park: the long stay car park off Accrington Road is still on the development plan for the site but it appears that R V B C have changed their mind and now intend to operate it themselves.

Unitary authority, it is likely that R V will be absorbed into a larger unitary authority within the next two years. The chosen format will be published by the government this summer but the positive impact anticipated from a transfer of assets from R V may well not happen

I look forward to continuing to work for the benefit of the village.

Thank you. Martin Highton

### 3. Financial Summary of Accounts year ending 31/03/2026

#### **Accounting Statement**

<b>Balances Brought Forward</b>		<b>£92,736.95</b>
Precept income	£84,150.00	
Other Receipts	£6,773.13	
Staff costs	(£20,767.47)	
Loan interest / Capital	£0.00	
VAT (net)	(£1,438.37)	
Other payments	(£47,017.06)	
<b>Balance Carried Forward</b>		<b>£114,437.18</b>

#### **Balance per bank statements at 31/03/26**

Nat West	£4,697.37	
Nat West Reserve	£24,701.97	
Skipton BS	£83,942.84	
QEII	£1,095.00	
<b>Net Balances as at 31/03/2026</b>		<b>£114,437.18</b>

The Clerk and RFO gave a brief summary of the accounting statement, explaining that the increase in the balance is due to monies yet to be invoiced for works agreed for the 2025–26 financial year, including tree works, the Parish Church churchyard, and QEII plans.

The Parish Council continues to meet the needs of the community and manages its finances within the budget framework set for each financial year.

Each year Whalley Parish Council's annual return is audited by an external auditor appointed by the Audit Commission and any person interested can inspect and make copies of the annual return and all books, contracts, bills, and receipts relating to them. These documents are available on reasonable notice, after the audit. The period for the exercise of public rights is from Wednesday 3 June – Tuesday 14 July 2026.

### 4. Guest Speakers

#### **Beck House - Founder & Director of Strength in Struggles S.I.S**

Beck delivered an excellent presentation sharing her story and own personal struggles and how she came about setting up Strength in Struggles S.I.S to help others who may be struggling with mental health, her future plans and her first premises which will be based in the heart of Whalley.

#### **Chris Rowe – Director of Estates and Facilities – & Tara Allen – Head of Communications and Engagement - Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust**

Chris & Tara gave a presentation from acquiring the site in 2024, updating on works completed and future plans. The plans haven't changed for the site and the 4 zones remain unchanged which include Woodview, Maplewood, St Luke's Church and the surrounding land. A slideshow is available on the Parish Council website for your information <https://tinyurl.com/Clayfieldspresentation> and they invite any questions from the community to be emailed to [whalley@lscft.nhs.uk](mailto:whalley@lscft.nhs.uk)

**5. Public Open Forum**

Members of the public were given the opportunity to raise any issues relating to the village. Tea, coffee, and biscuits were served as refreshments.

The chairman closed the meeting at 8.45pm and thanked everyone for coming.

Signed by Chairman.....Cllr Martin Highton ..... Date