

WHALLEY PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21 January 2021 at 7.30pm held remotely via zoom

Present: Councillor M Highton(Chairman)
Councillor J Brown (Vice Chairman)
Councillor C Ball
Councillor D Sleight
Councillor J Threlfall
Councillor G Brown
Councillor G Smith

Apologies: Sergeant Kevin Day
PCSO S Barton

In Attendance: M Richardson – Clerk to Whalley Parish Council
Borough Councillors Ged Mirfin, David Berryman, Mark Hindle and & 2 members of the public.

1664//20 to receive declaration of interests

None.

1665/20 to approve as correct the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Meeting held on 15 October 2020

It was resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 15 October 2020 be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

1666/20 to receive minutes of other Committees

Minutes of the Parish Council Planning Committee held on the 15 October 2020 were received.

1667/20 to adjourn Meeting for a Period of Public Discussion

Councillor Ged Mirfin stated that he had contacted McCarthy & Stone regarding the press release and letters that had been written to residents and Councillors regarding the development of Land off Accrington Road. He had requested a site visit for the Borough and Parish Councillors as soon as national restrictions are lifted. This site had received outline planning permission in 2012 and concerns were expressed about the literature issued by the Developer that gave 'the impression' that the development was imminent.

The Parish Council stated that the flooding remains a big concern and that they had not yet seen sight of an adequate Flood Prevention Scheme that had been agreed with other stakeholders including United Utilities. Lancashire County Council had expressed the view that this was a matter for the Environment Agency. Two members of the public had attended the planning

meeting expressing concerns on flooding grounds. It was agreed that the Council should write to the Chief Planning Officer at Ribble Valley Borough Council requesting clarification and an update on the flood prevention scheme and car parking proposals for the site. Ged Mirfin stated that Oakmere had recently agreed to invest £1.4 million for flood works and this would put pressure on McCarthy & Stone to make a similar contribution. In the meantime, Nigel Evans was trying to engage with the Environment Agency to see if they would pay for the full Flood Prevention Work in Whalley. It was suggested that Parish Council should also contact the Whalley and Billington Flood Action Group about the proposals discussed.

Borough Councillor Ged Mirfin updated the Parish Council on the support for businesses affected by loss of trade during the nighttime economy due to the pandemic. Help was available for self-employed people administered by Ribble Valley Borough Council through two Open Grants Schemes. Details are on the website. There is an additional central Government Grant that will also be available.

Borough Councillor David Berryman report the NHS Mersey Care Housing on Mitton Road there had been a pre planning application and a developer had been appointed. However he stated that the developer intended demolishing and rebuilding the housing which would significantly increase costs and reduce profit margins. He had concerns about whether the Developer would be able to meet the affordability quota given the cost of the land purchase and decision to demolish. He suggested that this should not be a problem for the Planning Authority but down to the financial planning of the appointed Developer. This could delay work.

Discussion focused on Anti-Social Behaviour. Ged Mirfin reported that Sergeant Day felt there was 'not a significant problem' in terms of the number of reports. Martin Highton stated that this was always a sticking point in managing the problem. Members of the public felt frustrated in trying to report on the 101 number and if they did report online it took time. In cases where individual felt nothing was done to address the problems residents give up reporting. This should not be used as a 'smoke screen' for doing nothing. Recent events include young people using a section of privately-owned land near Spring Wood. However the Parish Council did acknowledge the recent stop and search incidents sent a strong message out to people choosing to break the law. The Parish Council stated that this was not something that was going to go away but was a decision about how the situation is going to managed going forward. It was suggested that the meeting with Kevin Day should be set up in the near future.

Finally Councillor Ged Mirfin spoke about capital investment in the CCTV coverage for Whalley. Ribble Valley Borough Council was intending to take a report to the Community Safety Partnership in 2021 that will allow Parish Council's suffering for problems of anti-social behavior to apply for grant funding to purchase and maintain additional cameras. This would not include costs for staffing and monitoring the footage that was an ongoing significant revenue expense.

1668/20 **Reports from Councillors (Information Only)**

Councillor Dave Sleight reported that the Burial Committee had a Zoom meeting on Friday the 6th November. The contracts for removing the waste off site and the ground maintenance are to be renegotiated. We are very happy with the present situation from RVBC and Abbey Garden Services.

The Tree report identified 9 trees with Ash Die Back and these are to be cut down and removed. Fortunately they are not very large specimens.

In the Memorial Safety Inspection, 24 memorials were found to be unsafe and owners, as far as possible were contacted. Several issues have subsequently arisen on the implementation and consequences of this report and so a sub-committee has been formed to modify the existing Memorial Safety policy and hopefully make the procedure clearer.

During the winter months, repairs to the path due to a flood in the woodland, will be carried out following a successful insurance claim. The committee decided to accept advice and replace the existing wooden edging alongside the path with stone sets - a 30 meters stretch to begin with. A committee member was concerned with the public treating the Cemetery as a place to simply walk their dogs, which he thought unacceptable. He is to investigate other similar facilities and report back.

Councillor June Brown noted that during the second National Lockdown Vale Gardens was being used by many residents and visitors as a valuable green space. The lock on the Female toilet was still not working properly following vandalism and this had been reported to John Heap at Ribble Valley Council. On Remembrance Sunday a 'closed socially distanced' gathering of 6 people took place at the Commonwealth War Graves. Guidance changed very close to the event taking place and she expressed her gratitude to Councillor Cliff Ball for his endeavours and tenacity in getting the event organised. She had been approached by a member of the Friends of Whalley War Graves Group who expressed gratitude that a small service did take place to honour the soldiers. On Sunday 9 November a Church Service was held via zoom that June also attended. As agreed, there was no parade from the Church to the War Memorial. The last post was played by Councillor Patrick Brown at 11 am.

Patrick Brown felt the Parish Council had 'missed a trick' and more should have been done to celebrate the event. He also commented that some residents had expressed a positive view about the Clergy not leading the Service. He expressed sadness at the passing of Jean Riley a well-known character of Whalley. He stated that the Lay Brothers Dormitory that contained asbestos was due to be demolished and that the Diocese's of Blackburn and Salford would then need to determine next steps that would require significant funding. As no newsletter had not been produced for a while he suggested that the Parish Council could produce a 'calling card' with key numbers to include information such as reporting crime to the Police. He undertook to produce a 'mock up' for future consideration. He questioned whether the Planning Authority could request that the boarding of the Commonwealth War Graves Site could now be removed. Borough Councillor Berryman agreed to seek clarification. It was also suggested by Patrick as to whether the site can be registered as a Community Interest Asset. Borough Councillor Mark Hindle agreed to investigate and report back.

Councillor Martin Highton reported that he laid the wreath on Remembrance Sunday on behalf of the Parish Council as agreed. He commended Cliff Ball for organising the event at the Commonwealth War Graves. He had also been in contact with John Heap about individuals using public litter bins to dispose of domestic waste – an incident regularly occurring on King Street. John Heap agreed to investigate. He requested that additional information on the Ribble Valley Community Hub is placed in the Parish Council Noticeboard. The switching on the Christmas Tree and Street Lights will take place at the end of November but no formal event had been organised as yet. He noted that Pendle Partnership funding of the Jessica Loft house bench refurbishment will take place in the next few weeks. The Annual Tree report for Whalley Parish Church Yard highlighted the need for a large Horse Chestnut to eventually be felled. Ken Linford was seeking the relevant permission/view from Ribble Valley Borough Council. Martin reminded Parish Councillors the Precept meeting had been rescheduled from the 5 November 2020 to 3 December 2020.

Councillor John Threlfall reported that no further information had been received from the Lancashire Road Safety Partnership about the request to reinstate the Speed Van in a bid to increase enforcement in key locations in Whalley (Mitton Road/Accrington Road and Clitheroe Road). He stated that Whalley remained categorised as medium risk and it appeared there is no plan to re-evaluate this. John attend the Joint Burial Committee meeting on the 6 November 2020.

Councillor Gill Smith commended the efforts of Sergeant Kevin Day regarding an ASB incident on Abbey Fields. She stated that he dealt with the matter efficiently and that these comments should be passed on.

1669/20 To discuss enhanced CCTV Coverage for Whalley

Following the debate in the Public Discussion about anti-social behavior and the Borough Council’s proposal to make available a grant for Parish Council’s to enhance CCTV coverage. The Parish Council agreed that action must be taken and options considered. A critical issue is that the Prosecution needs to take place based on CCTV footage. The Borough Council was considering meeting 50% of the purchase cost and the additional monies would be met by the Parish Council. Initial discussions suggest that a new system may cost £50,000 to purchase. Thought would need to be given about how this is managed and regulations about data management. This will be discussed at the Precept Meeting on the 3 December 2020.

1670/20 To consider and approve an annual pay and spinal column point increase for the Clerk Salary in accordance with NJC Terms and Conditions

The Council approved a report as follows:

- a. To approve the increase in incremental pay from SCP 6 to SCP 7 in financial year 2020-2021 at a rate of £10.44 per hour for 72.16 hours per month , in accordance with the Employment Contract Terms and Conditions for the Whalley Parish Council Clerk.
- b. To note the overpayment of salary based on the Clerk working 18 hours per week rather than 16.65 from April 2020 – October 2020 based on the 2019 figure of pay at £9.96 per hour. £792.48 - £753.35 = £39.13 x 7 months = £273.91. This amount will be deducted from the December 2020 salary payment.

1671/20 To consider for appointment to 2 casual vacancies (Whalley East) and (Whalley Nethertown)

Councillors received prior to the meeting two applications for co-option to the two vacant seats on Whalley Parish Council. Councillors were given the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates. The Council agreed to appoint as follows: Caroline Allen (Whalley East) and Tracey Whistlecraft (Whalley Nethertown). The Clerk to send out for signature and return to Ribble Valley Borough Council – Acceptance of Office and Declaration of Pecuniary Interests. The paperwork would need completion before the Precept meeting on the 3 December 2020.

1672/20 To authorise Accounts, Payments, Receipts and Balances for November 2020

Payments			
Webmaintenance	(27.60)		

Electricity Vale Gardens	(89.18)		
Salary	(753.35)		
Home office	(43.33)		
Internet	(10.00)		
44 miles @0.45p	(19.80)		
Mobile rental	(5.00)		
Z3331 Churchyard annual report	(336.00)		
Z3330 Vale Gardens Annual Report	(168.00)		
Remembrance Sunday PC109	(100.00)		
	(1,552.26)	0.00	0.00

Balances: Nat West Current: £52667.45. QE2 Nat West £0 Skipton £22477.40.

1673/20 **Clerks Report for November 2020**

The Parish Council resolved to accept the Clerks report.

1674/20 **The Council Approved the date of the next meeting and Schedule of Meeting for 2021/22**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will take place on **Thursday 21 January 2021** . The Precept Meeting has been rescheduled to take place on Thursday 3 December 2020 at 7.30 pm at Whalley Old Grammar School unless COVID restrictions apply. A schedule of Parish Council meetings for 2021/22 was also circulated for information.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

Signed: _____ Date: _____