

WHITTINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

AN ORDINARY meeting of Whittingham Parish Council took place on **Monday 9th September 2013** at 7.00pm at Goosnargh Village Hall, Preston.

Members:

Cllr Alan Lewis – Chairman
Cllr Stan Hunter
Cllr Dave Hall
Cllr Ruth Mills
Cllr Lona Smith

Members of the public

3 members of the public
PCSO David Reid

Mrs Julie Buttle – Parish Clerk

APOLOGIES Cllr Margaret Rigby and Cllr B Huggon (after the meeting).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES from the meeting held on 8th July 2013.

MIN 48 It was RESOLVED that the Minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

TO ACCEPT DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND TO CONSIDER ANY WRITTEN REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations of interest.

TREE FELLING COMPLAINT AT CUMERAGH VILLAGE

Members were informed that the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 permits the Council to exclude the public and press to consider the early stages of any dispute. It was NOTED that the resident who made the formal complaint regarding the tree felling at Cumeragh Village was not present, however his neighbour was present and he advised that he wished to address the Council.

MIN 49 It was RESOLVED that the meeting be adjourned to hear the concerns regarding the tree felling. After seeking assurances from the resident, it was further RESOLVED that it was not necessary to exclude members of the public.

The resident explained that he and his neighbour lived closest to the trees and the first they knew about the felling was when a flyer was posted through their doors stating that the trees would be chopped down in less than 2 weeks. He felt that a poster should have been displayed on the trees as residents don't look at the Council notice board.

He stated that he felt 'certain things were wrong' in relation to the way residents were told, the length of time given and that the surveys were not independent but he did agree with the City Council involvement.

He felt the trees should not have been felled especially as the appointed contractor could not state whether they would have lasted 'another 10 minutes or 10 years'. He concluded by stating he expected an apology and a commitment that the Council would do better next time.

Various Councillors responded to the points raised.

It was stated that the area is represented by a Parish Councillor who lives on The Square and a member of the Cumeragh Village Residents Association was also at the meeting when the tree felling was discussed. Whilst it was acknowledged that those closest to the trees may have preferred a more personal explanation, it is difficult to ensure that everyone is personally consulted on every decision.

It was stressed that 3 separate assessments were carried out on the trees - all of which indicated problems and as the Council has a responsibility to the public, it would have been irresponsible not to have acted on the information in the reports. It was also stated that the flyer was intended as an information document – not a consultation.

The resident responded by saying that he understood how the decision was made, but he felt that there were flaws in how the Council reached the decision. He believed that the Tree Survey was not 'independent' as it had been provided by someone who 'benefited' from felling trees and he drew attention to the fact that the contractor who quoted for the felling, also wanted a third tree to be felled. He stated that the Council should have paid for an additional survey to be carried out by a 'fully independent assessor', especially as he and his neighbour had questioned the need for any work to take place.

The Clerk clarified that the Council paid for a Tree Survey which stated that 2 trees and a branch needed to be felled and that the trees would benefit from thinning and crown raising. The Council sought quotes based on this information. When quoting for the felling works, a contractor stated that the thinning and crown raising was cosmetic and a branch and 3rd tree may need felling, consequently, the Clerk sought an independent assessment from the City Council.

The Chairman stated that he was sorry that the resident was aggrieved, but the Council had gone 'above and beyond' requirements by carrying out 3 assessments and he repeated that if the reports had been ignored, then public safety could have been at risk. The resident stated that he disagreed. He accepted the Council had a responsibility to assess the trees – but he maintained there was no evidence that the trees were a danger to the public and they should not have been felled.

The Chairman surmised that these points had been covered and suggested that the meeting should be reconvened.

The Clerk informed the resident that once the meeting was reconvened, the Council would discuss his request for an apology and whether the Council could improve its actions next time, but he would not be able to contribute further to the discussion. The resident stated he had expressed his view and left the meeting.

It was RESOLVED that the meeting be reconvened.

Members sought advice on how to proceed with the formal complaint as the resident was not present. The Clerk advised that the Council's Position Statement had been issued to the complainant and even though he was not present, a formal reply should be issued based on that, assuming that Members were satisfied that the Position Statement covered all the points raised in the letter.

MIN 50 Members RESOLVED that the Position Statement adequately covered the Council's actions and that they remained of the belief that the Council had gone 'above and beyond' requirements by obtaining 3 separate assessments before the work commenced. Following consultation with the Chairman, the Clerk will issue a reply to the formal complaint.

With regard to comments made during public participation, Members expressed regret that the resident remained aggrieved by the decision but concluded that the Council had followed its statutory responsibility of keeping residents informed by including the item on the agenda and advertising it in the local notice boards and website. A view was expressed that the Council should look again at its community engagement and communication procedures to consider how more attention can be drawn to specific items included on the agenda and another view was expressed that there was no obligation to issue the flyer – it had been issued out of courtesy to residents – and the implication that the Council had acted without due care and consideration was considered offensive.

MIN 51 Members RESOLVED that following consultation with the Chairman, the Clerk will issue a response to the resident. Community engagement will be considered on a future agenda as part of the aspirations for Quality Status.

MIN 52 It was RESOLVED that the meeting be adjourned for public participation. Residents expressed concern that Broughton Roundabout will be closed overnight on the 14 – 16th October with traffic being diverted along Whittingham Lane through Longridge and onto Bluebell Way and Eastway. Concern was expressed that rather than following this lengthy diversion, traffic will use Brabiner Lane as a short cut. The lane is totally unsuitable as vegetation restricts the width of the road and there are very few passing places. It was requested that the road is temporarily coned off to deter motorists taking this route whilst the work takes place at the roundabout. In addition to the above, it was stated that the road is signed as 'unsuitable for HGV's' but it is still used by lorries following Sat Nav devices. A request was made for a weight restriction and access only sign. The Clerk will raise these matters with LCC Highways and report back to the residents.

PCSO Reid informed the meeting there had been 14 crimes in a 90 day period 8 of which were in Whittingham. Of particular concern was the theft of a vehicle which appeared to have been placed on a low loader and residents were asked to be extra vigilant. An increase in assaults was reported by staff at Guild Lodge and the associated paperwork is being processed by the planned response team rather than the rural policing team. There has been an increase in crime at Longridge and Grimsargh and £2000 of electrical equipment was stolen in a burglary at Halfpenny Lane. Residents were urged to ensure premises are kept secure. An arrest has been made regarding £1000 theft of copper wire at Guild Lodge.

It was reported that the police are moving towards issuing a more corporate newsletter but the rural policing team are hoping to maintain delivery of a quarterly newsletter in the villages. A recent edition has been delivered in Goosnargh. The last PACT meeting was cancelled and it was confirmed that these will now be held less frequently but on a bigger scale with other agencies such as mountain rescue, wildlife officer, fire and ambulance services etc being invited. It was confirmed that the Whittingham one will be held after Christmas.

The police currently contribute £1200 a year to operate out of Goosnargh Village Hall and they have been asked to reduce these costs. The Village Hall is prepared to reduce the cost to £600 but assistance is required to reduce it further. The police requested that the Parish Council contributes £200 if it values the service and wants it to continue, in return, they will recruit 2 volunteers to answer queries etc for a couple of hours, 2 days a week.

The Clerk advised that the matter must be included as an Agenda item and a decision could not be made now. It was suggested that the police make a similar request to Goosnargh Parish Council.

The Clerk informed Members that PC Banks had mentioned the above before the meeting and had also suggested that the Parish Council operate from the building. This will also be included on the agenda for consideration.

It was RESOLVED that the meeting be reconvened.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS BEFORE COUNCIL

Note - Members are advised prior to the meeting that planning applications can be viewed at www.preston.gov.uk

06/2013/0512 Erection of orangery to side of dwelling following demolition of existing timber porch canopy at Piggot House Cumeragh Lane Whittingham

06/2013/0513 listed building consent for the above application.

MIN 53 Members RESOLVED to make no objections to the applications.

06/2013/0579 Detached garage and covered storage area at 5 Highgate, Goosnargh following demolition of existing garage.

MIN 54 Members RESOLVED to make no objections

BROUGHTON BY-PASS

06/2013/0527 Renewal of 06/07/0320 for measures to safeguard bats and great crested newts affected by Broughton bypass including bat roost, bat boxes and ponds. **06/2013/0528** Renewal of 06/06/0589 for construction of Broughton bypass and improvements to existing highways.

Members acknowledged that it will ease congestion in Broughton and noted that Broughton Parish Council support the proposal, even though it will do no favours for Whittingham as the congestion will be moved to another area and Whittingham residents will face a longer journey north.

MIN 55 It was RESOLVED that the principle of the by-pass needs to be supported but the finance needs to be in place to 'do it all in one go'. If finances are not in place then the southern section should be completed first. A condition should be attached confirming that no major housing will be permitted until the situation at Broughton crossroads is resolved as recommended by the Fox appeal decision for 06/2011/0344

APP/N2345/A/13/2200445

Notification has been received of an appeal by David Wilson homes against the refusal of 78 dwellings at Green Nook Lane / Whittingham Road. **06/2012/0544** Members NOTED the Parish Council's original comments will be submitted to the inspector. Cllr Hall provided some notes of a residents meeting and suggested that the bullet points be taken forward by the Parish Council. It was confirmed that the residents had appointed a spokesman for the appeal and Councillor Smith will be speaking as City Councillor and will refer to the area of separation in the Local Plan which will be released for public consultation in October.

MIN 56 Members RESOLVED that the Clerk submit the relevant bullet points to the inspectorate and that Cllr Hall will represent the Parish Council at the Inquiry.

RIBBLE VALLEY CORE STRATEGY

Members NOTED that the Ribble Valley Core Strategy was submitted to the Inspector in September 2012 and various documents had been updated which had resulted in an increase in housing numbers from 4000 to 5000 of which 1032 are to be provided for in Longridge. 282 already have permission leaving a balance of 750 of which 200 are expected to come from Preston.

MIN 57 Members RESOLVED to object to the housing increase in Longridge on the basis that the development will be unsustainable, there is no infrastructure master plan and it will have an adverse impact on Whittingham. Members reiterated that the Core Strategy was unsound and there has been very little consultation between Preston City and Ribble Valley despite the need for cohesive support.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Chairman verified that the statement of accounts reconciled with the bank statements for the end of August.

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

MIN 58 Members approved the following accounts already paid in accordance with Standing Order 26 (b) & (c)

	DETAILS	PAYEE	AMOUNT
CQ 1025	E-on Electric Bill	E-On	£13.10
CQ 1026	Grounds Maintenance	Barton Grange	£1500.00
CQ 1027	Tax / National Ins	HMRC	£82.40
CQ 1028	July salary	Mrs J Buttle	£348.36

Members NOTED the Clerk's annual salary has increased by £52 in accordance with the revised NJC pay scales.

MIN 59 Members RESOLVED to approve the following accounts for payment

DETAILS	PAYEE	AMOUNT
CPRE membership	CPRE	£29.00
Tree Felling	Mr J Gornall	£450.00
Domain Name Renewal	Mrs J Buttle	£4.19
Aug salary including Apr – July back pay	Mrs J Buttle	£369.22
Tax / National Ins	HMRC	£87.40

CUMERAGH VILLAGE PLAY AREA

The Clerk informed Members that the CVRA had submitted the LEF application without the help of Community Futures and there was no longer a requirement for the Parish Council to sign the letter of undertaking. Members were given a spreadsheet updating them on the grants applied for to date.

MIN 60 Members RESOLVED that the CVRA be invited to a future meeting once they have more to report on the LEF and BIFFA applications.

QUOTES FOR WORKS

MIN 61 Members RESOLVED to include an advert in the Goosnargh and Longridge Magazine requesting that local tradespeople register their details with the Parish Council if they would like the opportunity to quote for maintenance tasks.

TELEPHONE KIOSK – HALFPENNY LANE

Members stated local painters may be interested in the job. The Clerk advised that they ask them to contact the Clerk for further details so that all interested parties are given the opportunity to quote on the same information. Members will then consider the quotes in accordance with usual procedures.

BENCH - WHITTINGHAM LANE

Members considered the difference in price between the manmade benches and a cheaper wooden one. In view of the location under the trees, it was considered that a manmade one may be a better option in the longer term, however based on the likely use it was acknowledged that it is an expensive option.

MIN 62 Members RESOLVED that the Clerk ask if the City Council has any approved suppliers and ensure that any tradesman quoting to clean the paved area and secure the bench are also given an option to supply or repair the bench.

WINDOW BUS SHELTER – PLAY AREA

It was clarified that the window is needed in the rear of the bus shelter and it was stated that the company who built the shelter would be prepared to quote for the works. To comply with the financial regulations, the Clerk will contact them along with any other tradesman answering to the advert above.

MILLENNIUM GARDEN

Following the award of £388.50 from the Green Partnership Awards, Members were informed that certificates will be awarded to successful projects at a 'Celebration of Achievement' event to be held on Saturday 5th October at Brockholes Nature Reserve. **MIN 63** As the work will not be completed by then, it was RESOLVED that the Clerk contact the Awards and liaise with the Chairman regarding attendance.

LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS - AGM

MIN 64 It was RESOLVED that Cllr Hall attends the LALC AGM and LCC conference on Saturday 9th November.

NOTE NEW CORRESPONDENCE

Members NOTED the following information

Bat barns have been erected on Gotfield Front Fields allegedly in accordance with the planning permission. The Clerk is trying to establish if there are any plans or design specifications.

The Clerk advised that the Council needs to purchase the 9th edition of Charles Arnold Baker as we currently have issue 6. Woodplumpton will be asked to share the cost and the Clerk stated that she was intending to purchase it subject to Council approval at the October meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING The next meeting of the Parish Council will be **Monday 14th October 2013** at 7.00