

West Bradford Parish Council

Clerk:

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Minutes of the meeting of West Bradford Parish Council held on Wednesday 27 November 2024 at West Bradford Village Hall

Members present:	Parish Cllr A Bristol (Chair) Parish Cllr R Chew (Vice Chair) Parish Cllr H Best Parish Cllr M Fox Parish Cllr R Marsden
Apologies:	Cllr K Horkin MBE (RVBC)
Clerk present:	Andrew Glover
County Cllr present:	None
Members of the public / other persons present:	None

1.	Declarations of Pecuniary, Other Registrable and Non-Registrable Interests None	
2.	Minutes / Matters Arising a) <u>Minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2024:</u> The minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2024 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record. Proposed by: Cllr R Marsden Seconded by: Cllr H Best Resolved The signed minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2024 would be posted on the Parish Council website	Clerk

b)	<u>Matters arising:</u>	
i)	None	
3.	Public questions, comments or representations: None	
4.	Update from Ward Councillor present: None	
5.	Bradford Bridge <p>At the October meeting, members had agreed that the impact damage to Bradford Bridge (on its eastern wall, village side) appeared to be getting worse. In addition, further damage had been observed on the western wall (village side), adjacent to the footpath entrance.</p> <p>As requested, the Clerk had reported both of these issues to LCC's District Highways Partnership Officer. A fortnight later, LCC had responded by email to confirm that (i) the displaced coping stones were not considered to be dangerous; (ii) the western wall did indeed form part of parapet leading to the bridge, but no repairs to the damage were recommended at this time; and (iii) the above matters would be addressed during bridge strengthening works to be undertaken during 2025.</p> <p>Members noted the comments made by LCC, but Cllr Chew then reported that – at around 10am on 27 November – a large white vehicle had become stuck on the bridge for around 1 hour, causing traffic disruption and requiring the police to attend the scene. It was possible that this incident may have caused yet more damage to the coping stones and their supporting wall (which was considered to be crumbling when viewed from its side facing the river).</p> <p>Resolved Clerk to obtain a photograph of the possible further damage to the coping stones and wall, and report this to LCC Highways as Bridge Authority</p>	Clerk
6.	Haweswater Aqueduct Resilience Programme (HARP)	
a)	<u>Update – planning application 3/2021/0661</u> <p>At the October meeting, members had been advised that the site of the proposed Park and Ride facility (the car park at Heidelberg Materials) was to be relocated due to its unavailability for the duration of the construction project. As a result, United Utilities had intended to host a “drop in” session at the Lancashire Federation of Young Farmers Club from 3-7pm on 7 November 2024. This meeting had been attended by Cllr Fox, who reported that a new site to the west of Pimlico Link Rd (between Dugdale's and the A59 junction) was now under consideration. Members agreed that – if adopted – this new location would be problematic, in that vehicles leaving the Park and Ride facility would only add to the already heavy</p>	

	<p>traffic flow heading south and seeking to join the A59. Members' suggested solution to this situation was the establishment of a new roundabout on the A59 / Pimlico Link Rd junction.</p> <p>In the immediate term, improvements to road safety at the junction could also be achieved by regular pruning of the trees which impeded sight lines when turning left from Pimlico Link Rd onto the A59.</p> <p>Resolved Clerk to report members' comments on this matter to United Utilities</p>	
7.	<p>Overview of financial position:</p> <p>a) <u>Monthly accounts – October 2024</u></p> <p>The Clerk submitted details of income and expenditure for the month of October 2024 for approval by the Parish Council and signing-off by the Chair.</p> <p>Resolved That the record for October 2024 as presented would be signed off</p> <p>b) <u>Budget – increase to National Insurance Contributions (NICs)</u></p> <p>In her budget on 30 October, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had announced that – from 6 April 2025 - the rate of employer contributions would rise from 13.8% to 15%. In addition, the threshold at which employers start paying the tax on each employee's salary would be reduced from £9,100 per year to £5,000.</p> <p>The NHS and other public sector bodies were to be exempted from these changes. However, NALC had recently been informed that the Local Council (parish & town councils) sector was not defined as a 'direct' public sector body and therefore would not benefit from the exemption.</p> <p>In 2023/24, the Clerk's gross salary had been £4,526 – still below the threshold for payment of NICs. However, given that a Clerk's salary would rise with future pay increases, members were advised that this could become an issue moving forward. (For instance, should the Clerk's salary rise by £1,000 to say £5,500pa from April 2025, the NICs due from the Parish Council would be £75).</p> <p>Members noted that NALC had estimated that the changes to NICs may cost the Local Council sector up to £10m per year, and had advised its member bodies to assess the financial implications in their current round of budget setting.</p> <p>c) <u>Precept 2025/26</u></p> <p>The Parish Council had been asked to officially confirm its requested 2025/26 precept to RVBC by Tuesday 24 December 2024.</p> <p>In order to encourage discussion, the Clerk had produced a document outlining a range of percentage options for increasing the 2025/26 precept from its current level. Members considered these options in detail, noting that - whilst less severe</p>	


	<p>than in recent years - the rate of inflation (as calculated under the Consumer Price Index) had still risen by 2.6% in the 12 months to September 2024.</p> <p>After lengthy deliberation, it was agreed that, in order to ensure the Parish Council could meet its commitments for 2025/26, a 5% rise in the precept would be appropriate. (This increase was proposed by the Vice Chair and seconded by Cllr Best; it was carried on a unanimous vote).</p> <p>In reaching this decision, members commented that, unlike some other parish councils, West Bradford Parish Council did not carry a high level of reserves. Members were also conscious that proposed capital outlay over the coming year would be significant (eg the intended purchase of 3 new stone entrance signs at the arterial access points to the village, as well as possible celebrations in May 2025 to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day).</p> <p>Members expressed their clear desire not to over-burden residents, recognising that the national economy remained under severe financial pressure. However, a 5% rise (amounting to £443) would take the precept to £9310, meaning that each of the 380 households in the village assessed at Band D for Council Tax would only pay an additional £1.41 over 2025/26 when compared to the 2024/25 level.</p> <p>In late 2023, the Parish Council had opted to update residents on the agreed precept increase via an article on the Parish Council website; this article had been viewed 31 times. It was agreed that, in the interests of transparency, this exercise would be repeated in 2024.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>Members agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raise the precept for 2025/26 by 5%, from £8,867 to £9,310 (an increase of £443); • authorise the Chair and Clerk to sign the documentation provided by RVBC accordingly; • ask the Clerk to forward the completed documentation to RVBC by the stated deadline of Tuesday 24 December 2024; and • ask the Clerk to place information on the Parish Council website which would update local residents on the proposed increase and explain its rationale 	<p>Chair / Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
d)	<u>Payments to be approved</u>	
i)	<u>Gardening services</u>	
	<p>An invoice for £456 had been received from a local contractor for “time for maintenance of cenotaph gardens and planting of tubs with winter bedding plants from 11/7/24 to 11/11/24”.</p> <p>Members noted that this was the second payment to the contractor this financial year, the other being in July for £455. The total paid to the contractor therefore stood at £911, against a budget of £1000.</p> <p>cont</p>	

	Resolved Members agreed to authorise payment Clerk to arrange	Clerk
8.	Governance No update	
9.	Planning applications considered A) <u>Planning applications - for consideration as a statutory consultee:</u> i) Planning Application No: 3/2024/0143 Proposal: Regularisation of construction of car port to front. Location: 1 Meadow Croft, West Bradford BB7 4TJ Details of this application had been circulated to members on 6 November, with a deadline for submission of any comments to RVBC of 26 November 2024. Both the Chair and Cllr Chew had formally declared a Non-Registrable Interest in this matter and had not participated in any online discussion, nor did they contribute to any debate on the night. Members noted that, following consultation with those members of the Parish Council who had not formally declared an interest in this matter, a consultation response opposing the application in its current format had been drafted by the Clerk. With the agreement of the 3 members who had not declared a formal interest, this response had been submitted to RVBC prior to the deadline of 26 November. A final copy of the consultation response was presented to members. ii) Planning Application No: 3/2024/0896 Proposal: Proposed erection of a building for the sale of items produced on the farm (use class E(a)) together with associated car parking and seating area. Location: Halsteads Farm, Grindleton Road, West Bradford BB7 4QH Cllr Marsden declared a Non-Registrable Interest with regard to this matter, and did not take any part in the discussion. The other members considered the application but concluded that no consultation response to RVBC was required on this occasion. B) <u>List of contested applications</u> The Clerk continued to compile a list of contested applications and submit this to members on a regular basis for their consideration. The purpose of this exercise was to assist members in keeping track of these applications, and to provide more clarity around the subsequent determinations made by RVBC / Planning Inspectorate.	

	An updated version of the document was presented for members' consideration, with application number 3/2024/0143 having been added to it.	
10.	<p>Lancashire Best Kept Village Competition (LBKVC) 2024</p> <p>a) <u>Feedback from event organisers</u></p> <p>As requested, since the October meeting the Clerk had:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advised various parties entering the Outstanding Features categories of the judges' feedback, as appropriate; and • placed on the Parish Council website information about the villages "Highly Commended" status in the Small Villages category, along with appropriate judges' feedback. 	
11.	<p>Action Plan 2024</p> <p>a) <u>Content of Action Plan 2024</u></p> <p>The Clerk presented an updated version of the Action Plan for 2024 for members' consideration.</p> <p>b) <u>Lancashire Day</u></p> <p>The Lancashire flag had been due to be flown on 27 November for Lancashire Day. The Clerk confirmed that this had indeed taken place.</p>	
12.	<p>New signage – access to the village</p> <p>a) <u>Provision of signage:</u></p> <p>At the October meeting, the Clerk had reported on his meeting with a local contractor. It had been agreed that, in accordance with its Financial Regulations, the Parish Council would seek further quotes from two other suppliers. Members had identified two candidates during the meeting, and the Clerk had subsequently approached them by email; one of these had not responded, but the other had contacted the Clerk and indicated his willingness to be involved in the project. However, the responding trader had advised that – to ensure the accuracy of any quote provided - it would be preferable for the Parish Council to agree its preferred location for the stones at the earliest opportunity. (Any quote that he gave would naturally be influenced by the size of the stone, itself determined by the constraints of any location). Members agreed with this stance, especially having considered the information provided by LCC Highways, which confirmed that any fixed item on the highway must be set back from the edge of the carriageway by a <u>minimum</u> of 450mm. Whilst LCC considered that the proposed location in front of the Village Hall would meet this criterion, the other proposed venues (at the junction of Waddington Rd / Eaves Hall Lane and on Clitheroe Rd) were more problematic in terms of space available. A number of steps were agreed in an attempt to move this forward:</p> <p>cont</p>	

	<p>tree for display on the Coronation Gardens. Confirmation had since been received that the donated Xmas tree would indeed appear on the Coronation Gardens site in due course.</p> <p>b) <u>Dressing the tree</u></p> <p>Once the tree arrived, members would liaise and agree a date for dressing it.</p> <p>Cllr Chew confirmed that the Xmas tree lights were in her possession.</p> <p>c) <u>Senior Citizens' Xmas Party</u></p> <p>As requested, the Clerk had arranged for a donation of £275 to be made to the Village Hall Management Committee for the Senior Citizens Xmas Party.</p> <p>The Chair had attended the recent meeting of the Parish Council's Liaison Committee, where it had been reported that a grant of £250 was available from RVBC to support Xmas lunches in the community. The Clerk advised that he had already forwarded details of this grant to the Village Hall Management Committee.</p> <p>d) <u>Xmas gifts</u></p> <p>The Clerk had yet to purchase a voucher to the value of £30, to be redeemed at the 3 Millstones, for the 2 residents to be recognised for their work to support the Parish Council.</p>	
15.	<p>Village "welcome letter"</p> <p>At the October meeting, members had noted that new residents moving into the village received a "welcome letter" from the Village Hall Management Committee advising them of local facilities and seeking to promote their integration into the community. However, it had been suggested that the wording of the current letter could be expanded to incorporate other key bodies such as the Parish Council and the Hub. After perusing the current letter, members supported this suggestion and agreed that Cllr Chew should work with the Chair of the Village Hall Management Committee to broaden the existing wording.</p> <p>Resolved Cllr Chew to pursue</p>	RC
16.	<p>Lengthsman</p> <p>a) <u>Invoices</u></p> <p>Members noted that the Lengthsman had not submitted an invoice for work undertaken during October 2024.</p>	

b)	<p><u>Attendance of Lengthsman</u></p> <p>At the October meeting, it had been agreed that the Clerk would write to the Lengthsman and invite him to attend the Parish Council meeting to be held in January 2025. The purpose of this would be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allow both members and the Lengthsman to reflect on how 2024 had gone (from both his perspective and that of members); and • better understand his intentions for 2025 (bearing in mind (i) health issues; (ii) the Lengthsman being on an annual fixed term contract due to expire on 28 February 2025; and (iii) the importance of 20-25 hours per month being worked in the key period of May – July 2025). <p>An email had been sent to the :Lengthsman, but no response received.</p> <p>Resolved Clerk to again contact the Lengthsman prior to the January meeting</p>	Clerk
17.	<p>Reports from sub-committees / other meetings attended</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing Field / Village Hall – Cllr Fox reported that the internal alterations to the main hall / lounge would commence on 16 December 2024 (once the Senior Citizens’ Xmas Party had taken place). This would be followed by the work to install external doors to the rear of the building. As a result, the next meeting of the Parish Council would need to be held in the recently refurbished upstairs meeting room. • Parish Councils’ Liaison Committee – the Chair had attended the meeting held on 7 November 2024 – see minute item 14c. • Lancashire Association of Local Councils – no update; and • Hanson Cement Liaison Committee – date of next meeting tbc 	
18.	<p>Correspondence / requests received</p> <p>a) <u>Little Green Bus</u></p> <p>The Parish Council had received a request for funding from the CEO/Manager of the Little Green Bus Company, which provided community transport in the Ribble Valley. Members agreed that unfortunately the Parish Council was not in a position to grant any funding to this body at this time.</p>	
19.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>a) <u>Resignation of Clerk</u></p> <p>The Clerk reported that, after 8 years of service to the Parish Council, he had recently advised the Chair of his intention to resign from his post. This decision was due to the Clerk’s personal circumstances, and in no way reflected on the workings of the Parish Council, a body which he had been proud to represent. He was willing to remain in post until the end of March 2025, by which time it was hoped</p>	

<p>that a replacement Clerk would be appointed (although members noted that there would also be vacancies in the neighbouring parishes of Grindleton, Waddington and Chatburn).</p> <p>Members thanked the Clerk for his efforts to date. It was agreed that, as no obvious local candidates for the role were known, an approach should be made to Chatburn Parish Council; it was understood that this body had interviewed for a new Clerk this very day, and it was possible that unsuccessful candidates may be interested in working for West Bradford Parish Council.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, it was agreed that an advertisement for a replacement officer should be produced as soon as possible. Authorisation to develop a job advertisement, as well as making any changes to the contract / job specification as required, would be delegated to the Chair and Clerk working in conjunction.</p> <p>Resolved Clerk to contact Chatburn Parish Council Clerk / Chair to progress relevant documentation</p>		Clerk Chair / Clerk
<p>Date / time of next meeting:</p> <p>The next scheduled meeting of West Bradford Parish Council was to be held at 7.30pm on Weds 29 January 2025</p> <p>The meeting closed at 8.22pm.</p>		
Signed by:		
	<p>Date:</p> <p>29.1.25</p>	<p>Cllr A Bristol</p> <p>Chair </p>