

Grindleton Parish Council

Clerk: Andrew Glover 24 Hillside Drive West Bradford Clitheroe BB7 4TG

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Minutes of the meeting of Grindleton Parish Council on Tuesday 2 April 2024 at the Pavilion, Grindleton.

Members present:	Parish Cllr Lorraine Halley (Chair)	
	Parish Cllr Glenn Wheeler (Vice Chair)	
	Parish Cllr Paul Atkinson	
	Parish Cllr Tony Bramwell	
	Parish Cllr Megan Haslam	
	Parish Cllr Susan Walsh	
Apologies for absence:	Parish Cllr Chris Brennan	
	Borough Cllr Kevin Horkin MBE (RVBC)	
Clerk present:	Andrew Glover	
Members of the public	Ms Deborah Murray (see minute item 9a)	
present:		

1.	Declara	ations of Interest	
	a)	Standing orders suspended	
		Re minute item 15a below, Parish Cllr Atkinson declared an Other Registrable Interest as he had been a former employee of Bowland High School.	
		Re minute 20a below, the Chair declared an Other Registrable Interest as she was working closely with the B4RN initiative.	
	b)	Standing orders resumed	
2.	Public	Participation	
	See mi	nute item 9a.	

3. Minutes / matters arising

a) Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5 March 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2024 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

Proposed by: Cllr Bramwell Seconded by: Cllr Walsh

Resolved

The Chair was authorised to sign off the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2024, and it was agreed that the minutes of this meeting would be posted on the Parish Council website

Clerk

- b) Actions taken / matters arising since the last meeting (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)
- i) The Clerk had compiled a list of actions for members to note / update briefly on progress since the last meeting.

Subject to a guillotine of 30 minutes, members gave verbal updates on their respective actions. These were captured on the list retained by the Clerk.

4. Overview of financial position

a) Monthly accounts – March 2024

The Clerk presented details of income and expenditure for the month of March 2024 for approval by the Parish Council and signing-off by the Chair.

Resolved

That the record for March 2024 as presented would be signed off

b) <u>Budget monitoring – Q4</u>

The Clerk presented a summary of the budget for Q4 2023/24. Key points arising from this were:

- income had been well above target this year, with over c£11,400 brought in against an expected £9,700. This was largely due to grant funding received (eg the RVBC Concurrent Functions grant came in at £268 above budget; LCC had provided £800 for PROWs and biodiversity; and RVBC had provided £95 for Xmas lights), although there had also been increased income from higher allotment rents;
- the main budget discrepancies continued to relate to staff costs. With regard to the Lengthsman, spend over the financial year had totalled c£2,600, some £600 above budget. However, the main expenditure

had occurred in Q2 (£1419), with subsequent spend in both Q3 and Q4 being below the quarterly target. In addition, the Clerk's gross salary over the year had amounted to almost £5,500, against a budget of £4,100. It was clear that workload on the Clerk remained high, with his working hours over the year totalling 324 at an average of 27 hours per month (with a high of 40.41 hours). Finally, some unanticipated spend had been incurred, eg defibrillator batteries, a donation to the Little Green Bus and materials for signage; and

 overall spend this year had amounted to over £23,000, although £10,000 of this was due to the transfer of funding to the UT Bank interest bearing account. However, even if this transfer were to be discounted, overall spending this year would still exceed budget by c£3000.

At year-end, financial assets (excluding the £20,000 reserves held in the UT bank) were approximately £4,400, down from c£6,000 at the end of 2023/24. In view of the level of reserves remaining at year-end, it was agreed that the sum of £1,000 should be allocated for work on developing the commemorative biographies for veteran soldiers associated with the village.

With regard to the Clerk's salary, members noted that the excess of spend over budget was commensurate with the number of hours worked by the Clerk (especially since the move to monthly meetings). A number of options to reduce the Clerk's workload moving forwards were considered, and it was agreed that the situation would continue to be monitored moving forward (with Cllr Haslam assisting by compiling the Action Log).

Resolved

Members agreed to:

- approve the budget at the end of Q4 for 2023/24;
- continue to seek to reduce the Clerk's workload wherever practicable, eg
 by Cllr Haslam compiling the Action Log;
- allocate the sum of £1000 for work on developing commemorative biographies; and
- note that a draft budget for 2024/25 would be presented by the Clerk at the AGM in May

c) <u>VAT Claim</u>

Prior to the end of the financial year (and in line with a recommendation from the 2022/23 internal audit), the Clerk had submitted a claim for a VAT refund from HMRC prior to closing down the annual accounts. This claim had amounted to £87.25.

d) | Clerk's salary

The Clerk indicated that – in line with his contract of employment – his salary was due to rise by an increment from 1 April 2024. The Clerk was currently paid at SCP

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Clerk

	18 (£15.21) on the NALC scale; this would rise to £15.48 per hour at SCP 19, an hourly increase of 27p.	
	Resolved	
	Members endorsed the rise to SCP 19 from 1 April 2024	
5.	Improving Parish Council effectiveness	
a)	Shared document storage	
	At the February meeting, Cllr Atkinson had confirmed that he was intending to progress the adoption of the Microsoft 365 facility during the forthcoming half-term holiday. Cllr Atkinson apologised for having been unable to progress this matter as he would have wished, but committed to moving it forward during the current Easter school holidays.	
ii)	External audit arrangements for 2023/24 - information from LALC	
	At the February meeting, Cllr Wheeler had indicated that — as part of his earlier research into potential document storage facilities — he had acquired the domain name grindletonpc.org, which would potentially allow the Parish Council to secure an email address in compliance with the forthcoming requirements of the external auditor (ie be an address which was owned by the Parish Council). This domain name had now been activated at a cost of £10 pa (currently paid by Cllr Wheeler and for which he would be reimbursed in due course). Cllrs Wheeler and Atkinson agreed to liaise as appropriate over the coming weeks on this matter.	
6.	Format of May meetings	
a)	<u>AGM</u>	
i)	<u>Format</u>	
	Members considered and approved a document setting out the proposed format for the AGM, to be held in May 2024.	
ii)	Start time	
	Members were reminded that – for the 2023 AGM – an earlier start time of 7pm had been adopted due to the volume of business on the night. It was agreed that the start time of 7pm would again be adopted for the 2024 AGM, and also for all regular meetings of Grindleton PC thereafter.	
	Resolved Clerk to advise GRGC of the change to the start time of future meetings	Clerk

iii) Advance apologies

The Clerk confirmed that 2 apologies (from Cllrs Bramwell and Walsh) had already been given for the meeting to be held on 7 May. It was therefore agreed that – subject to room availability - the AGM should be held on Monday 1 May.

Resolved

Clerk to approach Peter Northcliffe and establish room availability on 1 May

Clerk

iv) Publicising the AGM

The Clerk reminded members that, under Paragraph 3.3 of the Parish Council's Standing Orders, a public notice should be posted in a conspicuous place informing members of the public of the venue, time, date and business to be transacted at the meeting. The notice should be posted at least three clear working days before the meeting.

Resolved

Chair to arrange for the display of a notice on the Parish notice board

Chair

b) Regular May meeting

i) Parish Plan

At the meeting of the Parish Council held in July 2023, members had agreed a number of amendments to governance documentation. With regard to the Parish Plan, it had also been agreed that a full debate on the Parish Plan — as the sole agenda item — should be held at the regular meeting to take place after the AGM each May. Such an approach would reflect the importance of the Parish Plan to the Parish Council' s objectives and priorities throughout the coming year, and the importance of keeping it topical and current.

Members were reminded of their previous decision and asked the Clerk to prepare the agenda accordingly. It was agreed that:

- a copy of the current Parish Plan would be circulated beforehand by the Clerk;
- the first 15 minutes of the meeting would involve "blue sky thinking" on what members would wish to see included in a new parish plan; and
- the remainder of the meeting would consider the format of a new parish plan, its presentation, monitoring arrangements, local promotion when finalised etc.

Resolved

Clerk to prepare a discussion on the Parish Plan as the sole agenda item for the regular May meeting

Clerk

7. Date for November meeting

The Clerk confirmed that – due to a clash with Bonfire Night celebrations - arrangements had now been completed to move the date of the November meeting from the 5^{th} to the 12^{th} .

8. **External audit 2023/24**

Since the March meeting, the Clerk had received information from the external auditors (PKF Littlejohn) setting out the procedure for the external audit for 2023/24. In light of this procedure, members were asked to consider the following matters:

a) Timescales / deadlines to be met

The Clerk had drafted a timetable of actions to ensure that all necessary deadlines imposed by the external auditor would be met. Members noted that this would require them to sign off a considerable amount of formal paperwork at both the May and June meetings of the Parish Council.

Resolved

The draft timetable prepared by the Clerk would be formally adopted

b) Internal auditor

The Clerk had now made contact with the Parish Council's internal auditor, Clare Atkinson, who had agreed to produce the internal reporter's report in accordance with the above draft timetable. The Clerk would therefore aim to have the necessary paperwork with Clare by mid-April.

c) <u>Certificate of Exemption</u>

In previous years, the Parish Council had tended to submit a Certificate of Exemption, thereby foregoing the need to undergo a full audit and avoiding payment of the audit fee (£210 + VAT).

Authorities wishing to claim exemption from a limited assurance review for 2023/24 were obliged to meet a number of criteria, as set out in section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015:

- both total gross income and total gross expenditure must have been below £25k; and
- no public interest report/statutory recommendation/advisory notice/judicial review/application to court re unlawful item of account should have been issued by its external auditor for the 2022/23 year; and
- the relevant financial year was not one of the first three years of the authority's existence.

cont

Resolved Members confirmed that the Parish Council would once again wish to submit a Certificate of Exemption to the external auditors The Clerk was authorised to prepare a draft certificate of exemption for consideration / signing off at the regular May meeting

9. Planning applications to be considered

a) Applications on which the Parish Council is a consultee

Planning Application No: 3/2024/0149

Proposal: Proposed demolition of boundary wall and creation of new vehicular

access and driveway.

Location: 4 Shaw Terrace Main Street Grindleton BB7 4RA

Details of this application had been circulated to members on 7 March 2024, with a deadline for any submission to RVBC of 28 March 2024.

Members noted that the premises subject to the application fell within the Grindleton Conservation Area and the Forest of Bowland AONB / National Landscape.

At their meeting on 5 September 2024, some months prior to submission of the above application, members had given initial consideration to an informal approach from the resident. Based on information then available, they had concluded at the time that the proposal for the creation of a new driveway was not one which they were minded to oppose. In March 2024, once the full application had been submitted to RVBC, members had considered it in detail via email, and – as no objections had been expressed – the Parish Council had not submitted a response to RVBC within the consultation period. However, in the course of member correspondence Cllr Brennan had pointed out that the proposed development was (i) adjacent to an electricity sub-station; (ii) opposite a bus stop; and (iii) close to a slight bend in the road. The Chair had noted that it would be interesting to hear the views of the Highways Authority on such issues, given that a previous application in a nearby location had been refused. The comments from LCC as Highways Authority had now been received and – at the request of County Cllr Mirfin - were presented to members for their information.

Members noted that a total of 3 emails of objection to the application had been displayed on the Borough Council's website. Points of concern included:

- the proposed development was considered out of keeping with the local area and AONB / National Landscape;
- road safety issues may arise from pedestrians having to cross in front of the new driveway, proximity to bus stop etc; and
- the increased use of tarmac having a negative impact on local wildlife.

The applicant, Ms Deborah Murray, had indicated her wish to address members on her application at the meeting. (Ms Murray confirmed that she had no objection to her name appearing on the minutes). In a short presentation, the applicant began by giving some context to the application, setting out a number of incidents

which had occurred since she had moved into the village and which had prompted her need for off-road parking. She also noted the increase in parking congestion arising from visitors to the village (often to attend the Rum Fox), and her proposed development would hopefully contribute to easing this problem. Ms Murray outlined the nature of the application, which she stated was consistent with a previous application passed in 1978, but which had lapsed due to non-implementation. She sought to refute some of the letters of objection submitted to the Borough Council, commenting that:

- some of the street furniture in the vicinity of the development would soon be replaced and relocated;
- only the entrance to the driveway would be tarmacked at the County Council's insistence (the remainder of the drive being left untarmacked);
 and
- as a keen gardener she would seek to protect local wildlife wherever possible.

Members thanked Ms Murray for her attendance, observing that — as the consultation period had ended — no further comments could be submitted prior to determination of the application by the Borough Council.

10. Haweswater Aqueduct Resilience Programme (HARP)

a) Planning application 3/2021/0661 – update

No update.

11. Footpaths

A) Log of footpath concerns

The Clerk presented an updated version of the log of footpath concerns.

B) <u>Update on actions:</u>

None, other than those discussed on Action Log.

12. Other reports submitted to LCC / other agencies

The Chair confirmed that a number of matters of local concern had been reported to the appropriate agency:

Date	Ву	То	Ref No	Location	Issue
9.3.24	Anne	ENW		Main St	Contractors
	Huson				failed to seal
					new tarmac to
					the road surface
14.3.24	LH	LCC	3944971	Ribble Lane	Pothole (40 -
					99mm deep)

16.3.24	LH	RVBC	Main St	Untaxed vehicle abandoned for c4 months
22.3.24	LH	LCC	Whitehall Lane	Water bubbling out from beneath a manhole cover

^{*}The Chair reported that this problem had now been addressed by the landowner, who had rodded the drain in question.

13. Lancashire Best Kept Village Competition 2024

a) <u>Update</u>

The Chair confirmed that entry to this year's competition (Champion Village class) had now been completed and the entry fee (£25) paid.

Ongoing preparations included:

- Grindleton WI had organised its annual Litter Pick, followed by free, fresh coffee and scones back at the Pavilion; and
- GRGC had also spring cleaned the Pavilion grounds and playground.

The Chair noted that some expenditure on tubs for summer planting would be required, and she intended to take a local resident with her when buying plants to advise her accordingly. It was suggested that a local nursery may be willing to sponsor the tubs / plants if items were purchased solely from them.

Members discussed other possible measures to be taken in advance of judging, including:

- the possible replacement of oak benches at the Cherry Trees; and
- the repainting of the Grindleton stone sign.

Resolved

Cllr Wheeler to explore the acquisition of suitable stone paint for use on the Grindleton stone

GW

b) Walk around village

In Spring 2023, prior to the competition, members had undertaken a fact-finding walk around the village in order to identify preparations which may support the village in its entry. It was agreed that this exercise would be repeated on Saturday 13 April 2024, meeting at the Cherry Trees at 10am.

14.	Allotments	
A)	General issues	
a)	Commendations for allotment improvements made by new tenants:	
	Cllr Bramwell had recently visited the allotment site and noticed a number of site improvements made by incoming tenants; these were illustrated in photographs for members' information. Members were pleased to see the improvements made, and asked for positive feedback to be given at the forthcoming tenants' meeting on 10 April.	
	Resolved Clerk / Clir Bramwell to feed back to tenants	Clerk / TB
В)	Tenants' meeting	
	The date of the tenants' meeting had initially been fixed for 7.30pm on 3 April 2024 at the Pavilion; however, due to personal circumstances, it had become necessary to change the date of the meeting to Wednesday 10 April instead. All tenants had been advised accordingly, by email or letter. The Parish Council would be represented at the meeting by ClIr Bramwell and the Clerk.	
	A copy of the agenda for the meeting was provided for members' information, and an update given on which tenants had indicated their willingness to be present.	
C)	Update on take-up of plots	
i)	The Clerk confirmed that all plots had now been filled and all rent paid for 2024/25. Only one signed tenancy agreement had yet to be returned.	
	Resolved Clerk / Cllr Bramwell to discuss informally with tenant at the tenants' meeting	Clerk/
D)	Revised tenancy agreement 2024/25 – feedback from tenants	"
i)	Tenant of Plot 4	
	As agreed, a detailed response had been sent to a letter from the tenant of Plot 4, in which clarification about a number of allotment-related issues had been sought. A copy of the correspondence was provided.	
E)	Lease agreement / possible areas of conflict with tenancy agreement to be explored	
	As agreed at the March meeting, the Clerk had approached a legal officer at_RVBC Legal Services who had helpfully agreed to advise the Parish Council on any areas where the lease and revised tenancy agreement may come into conflict.	
	Resolved Clerk to pursue a response from RVBC before May meeting	Clerk

F)	Water bills 2024/25	
	Members were advised that, from April 2024, the monthly payment to Water Plus for water supply to the allotments would rise from £13.36 in 2023/24 to £18.91.	
15.	Rural Prosperity Fund (RPF)	
a)	Permissive Footpath	
	The Chair again thanked Cllr Atkinson for his efforts to date. Whilst she was keen make an initial approach to landowners and seek their views on the proposal, she considered that this could only be done once a plan of the proposed route of the permissive path had been drawn up.	
	Resolved Chair and Cllr Atkinson to discuss next steps outside of the meeting	Chair / PA
b)	Nature Recovery Network	
	Cllr Haslam reported that no significant progress had been made recently, although she had identified a number of possible funding options and would explore these in the coming weeks.	
	Resolved Cllr Haslam to (i) contact the Forest of Bowland National Landscapes team and (ii) look into LCC crowd fund Lancashire (culture and sports fund)	мн
16.	80th anniversary of D-Day – 6 June 2024	
	At the October 2023 meeting, members had agreed to participate in this important national event. Since then, the following measures had been agreed:	
	 GRGC would allow the former village cricket field could be used to host the event; 	
	 the Parish Council's beacon (currently stored on the cricket field site) could remain there pending the event in summer 2024. Unfortunately the beacon had recently been moved, but GRGC had been advised that the Parish Council still intended to use it and would house it elsewhere if necessary; 	
	 Cllr Brennan had agreed to ensure that the beacon (currently in two pieces) was fit for use; Resolved 	
	Cllr Brennan to pursue, in conjunction with Ollie	СВ
	 any event should be small-scale and require minimal organisation / management on the night. Refreshments would not be required, as residents could potentially meet in the Rum Fox prior to walking to the cricket field site where the beacon would be displayed. 	
	Resolved Chair to ask (i) Bill if he would play bagpipies at the event and (ii) Cllr	Chair
	Brennan if he would play the trumpet Chair to promote the event via social media beforehand	Chair

17. Update from Ward Councillor

No update.

18. Other meetings

- GRGC no update.
- <u>Parish Councils' Liaison Committee</u> the next meeting would take place on 11 April (Chair / Cllr Atkinson to attend). The Chair had requested that a discussion be held on the recent Ribble Valley Leisure Service survey / consultation (Strategic Leisure), which was considered to have been poorly handled by the Borough Council.
- WASP no update.

19. Correspondence received

a) Request for grit bins

At the January meeting, it had been agreed that the Clerk would make an approach to County Cllr Mirfin with regard to the need for grit to be provided on Back Lane and also The Spinney. Cllr Mirfin had subsequently pursued this matter on members' behalf, but had then indicated to the Clerk that LCC officers were unable to support the Parish Council's request. With regard to the request for bins to be located on roads which had been adopted by the Highways Authority, this would not be permissible as it would contravene existing policy guidelines. Instead, the County Council proposed that residents concerned at icy roads may wish to consider employing private contractors or purchasing grit from a local supplier. Where the request related to the installation of grit bins on an adopted road (such as The Spinney), it was stated that the relevant criteria had unfortunately not been met.

b) Need for possible planning consent to repair unadopted section of Back Lane

The Chair had previously sought guidance from LCC on whether — as a PROW — its consent would be needed for repairs to an unadopted section of Back Lane which fell within the Grindleton Conservation Area. The response had been in the negative, but LCC officers had suggested that an approach to RVBC would be appropriate. However, when approached, RVBC officers had then advised that the Parish Council "would need to consult with LCC's Public Rights Of Way Team prior to undertaking any works of repair to the section of road referenced".

Members noted this somewhat contradictory advice but determined not to pursue this matter further.

c) Reporting of Highway Faults

The Clerk had received, and been asked to pass on to members, a message from LALC setting out the various means by which highways emergencies could be reported to the County Council.

20. **AOB**

a) <u>B4RN</u>

The Chair reported that the last meeting of B4RN had been cancelled, with the next meeting due to take place possibly next week.

b) Wild flowers

Members recalled that Cllr Walsh had made contact with a company which was able to supply wild flower seed bombs. The company had now kindly agreed to supply the Parish Council with seed bombs in return for some publicity and the participation of local school children in any planting exercise. Whilst the latter had bee secured, and a number of members (including the Chair as well as Cllrs Walsh and Haslam) had devoted considerable time to moving the project forward, certain problems had been encountered. These included:

- the need for temporary fencing to be erected at the request of GRGC; and
- the importance of correctly preparing the ground prior to seeding, requiring the use of both a turf cutter and a rotavator.

Members thanked all those involved for their efforts to date, but - in view of these ongoing difficulties - it was agreed that the project should be deferred until 2025.

Resolved

Clerk to place the item on the agenda for further discussion in December 2024

Clerk

c) <u>Incident of Anti-Social Behaviour</u>

The Chair gave a confidential report on a recent incident of anti-social behaviour which had occurred in the village.

d) Drain camera

A resident of the village had approached the Chair asking whether the Parish Council would be able to pay for a drain camera to investigate water leakage on the track from Back Main Street. Whilst The Chair had confirmed that no Parish Council funds were available for such a matter, members agreed to have a look at the site during their forthcoming walk around the village (with a possible referral of any problems identified to Lancashire County Council).

e) Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

Lancashire County Council had been appointed as the lead body to establish a LNRS for the county. LCC had sought parish councils' support in the completion of a survey which would aim to inform development of the LNRS in Lancashire. With the support of the Chair, Cllr Haslam had kindly agreed to complete the survey on the Parish Council's behalf, which she had done by the deadline of 31 March. The Chair thanked Cllr Haslam for her efforts.

f)	Future development of Clitheroe town centre	
	The Chair updated members on her recent attendance at an open evening where the plans for future development of Castle St in Clitheroe town centre had been discussed. These included:	
	 widening certain footways, with increased use of block paving; and narrowing the highway on Castle St so as to increase pedestrian safety. 	
	Work is due to commence on 15 April 2024.	
g)	Concern at unsightly condition of the river bank / car park at the office block at The Spinney	
	The Chair had received a letter from a local resident expressing concern at what was considered the unsightly state of the river bank and car park at the office block at The Spinney. The letter indicated that, as the exterior of the building remained unfinished after many years, items such as builders' fences, bags of waste and broken furniture had been left to deteriorate and rot.	
	Members agreed to ask the Clerk to write to the owner of the office block and gently point out that the above complaint had been received.	
	Resolved	
	Clerk to write to the owner of the office block	Clerk
	The next meeting of Grindleton Parish Council will take place at 7pm on	
	Wednesday 1 May 2024 at Grindleton Pavilion. In addition to the regular meeting, the Annual General Meeting will also be held.	

The meeting closed at 9.40pm

Signed by:		
	Date: 1.5.24	Cllr L Halley (Chair)