

**DRAFT MINUTES OF CROSTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING -
WEDNESDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2025 AT CROSTON OLD SCHOOL**

In attendance: Cllrs P Sloan, K Almond, C Turner, P Fenemore. K Taylor, Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer & P Cafferkey, Acting Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer. Six members of the public in attendance.

1. Apologies for absence: Cllrs C Baines, P Strachan and C Titherington-Teale

17. Parish Councillor Vacancy

Agenda Item 17 was brought forward to this point in the meeting so that the new Councillor could fully participate in the meeting. One application had been received from a resident of Croston, Linzi Bannister. Following an informal discussion, **it was resolved** that that Linzi be appointed, and the Acceptance of Office form was completed. *Proposed by the Chair, Cllr Turner, seconded Cllr Fenemore, unanimous decision that Linzi be appointed with immediate effect.*

2. Declarations of interest

None. Cllr O’Kane was reminded to complete and return his declaration of interest form to the Clerk ASAP.

3. Minutes of the last parish meeting

Cllr O’Kane advised the parish council that he would be recording the meeting, in accordance with standing orders.

It was resolved the minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2025 were a true and accurate record. *Proposed by Cllr Sloan, seconded by Chair, Cllr Turner, for Cllr Almond. Cllrs O’Kane & Fenemore abstained.*

Standing Orders and financial regulations were suspended for a period of public participation

4. Public participation

To invite and listen to matters raised by members of the public.

Cllr O’Kane stated that he would be recording public participation; Members of the public objected to being recorded. Cllr O’Kane strongly opposed the objection, referencing the standing orders of two other parish councils. The Acting Clerk, in attendance to support the new Clerk, explained that public participation is not a formal part of the parish council meeting as the standing orders are suspended and recording is subject to the agreement of all those present; this is to encourage members of the public to be able to voice their views. A dispute arose between Cllr O’Kane and four members of the public who objected to being recorded. Subsequently the parish council meeting and democratic process were disrupted, for several minutes whilst the dispute continued with members of the public not agreeing to Cllr O’Kane’s actions of recording this element of the meeting. The Clerk stated she had not experienced the behaviour observed, in 40+ years of working in local government. The disruption resulted in newly elected Cllr L Bannister resigning, citing her concerns for the lack of respect Cllr O’Kane demonstrated to those present.

To continue public participation, and in consideration of the wishes of members of the public present, the Chair agreed to the suggestion for the parish council relocate to another room for public participation, with members of the public and excluding Cllr O’Kane.

- **Croston in Bloom**

Croston in Bloom representatives, Anne Peet and Marie provided an informative presentation on the huge efforts of volunteers involved with the annual planting and maintenance throughout the village.

It was noted the Community Garden roses need to be pruned. **The Clerk will contact** the Parish Council’s grounds maintenance contractor (Countrywide). It was noted the North West in Bloom competition has a ‘recreational ground’ section and it was suggested the village recreational ground enter the competition. **The Clerk will contact** Neville Norcross to see if he is happy for the Recreation Ground to be included in Croston in Bloom’s application.

- **Village Festivities**

David Blackburn gave an informative presentation on the Croston Festivities Group and the need for volunteers for the Christmas Fair, which is held on the first weekend in December annually. A huge effort from volunteers enables the festivities to take place, however, the number of volunteers is unfortunately dwindling. It was agreed the parish council continues to support the village festivities, by promoting events and the appeal for volunteers on the council noticeboards.

- **Central Lancashire Local Plan 2026-2038**

Chorley Councillor Alan Platt gave an overview of the Central Lancashire Local Plan, which covers Chorley, South Ribble and Preston. A date for wider consultation with parish councils and members of the public under the jurisdiction of the plan, is to be determined. Cllr Platt will keep the parish council informed. Prior to the recommencement of the parish council meeting, the Chair, Cllr Turner and Cllr P Sloan spoke privately to Cllr O’Kane, referencing the Code of Conduct.

Standing Orders and financial regulations were reinstated following the public participation

5. To approve a request from Croston in Bloom

It was resolved funding of c £400 would be made available for summer planting. *Proposed Cllr Sloan, seconded: Cllr Almond, for Cllrs Turner, Fenemore. Abstained Cllr O’Kane.*

6. Request from Croston in Bloom to use the Village Green 24 May 2025

It was resolved the village green could be used for the purpose of plant sales. *Proposed Cllr Almond, seconded Cllr Sloan, for Cllrs O’Kane, Fenemore, Chair, Cllr Turner.*

7. Planning matters

a. 25/00019/FUL The Grapes Hotel, 67 Town Road Croston, PR26 9RA.

Section 73 application to vary condition no.3 (approved plans) and 5 (pergola details) attached to planning permission ref. 24/AA405/FULH (internal refurbishment of all rooms, reinstatement and repair of structural parts of the building where required including the replacement of all windows and minor changes to internal

wall and door locations and external works to provide extremal seating, minor landscaping works and a covered seating area (retrospective)) to amend the design of the external seating area, to be fully covered. It was noted there is a covenant that a sign must be displayed, referencing permission for cars to be parked when using the church for divine worship, had been removed. Cllr Almond had already written about the sign. *Proposed Cllr Almond, seconded Cllr Sloan, unanimous.*

The Clerk will follow up the reinstalment of the sign permitting car park usage for divine worship.

b. 24/O1092/TCON. Coffee Cottage 74 Town Road Croston, PR26 9RB.

Notification of proposed works to trees within a conservation area involving the pollarding of 2 no. trees to the rear of no.74 Town Road.

c. 25/00014/FULHH. Barfor House Highfield Road Croston PR26 9HH. Erection of detached garage. *Proposed Cllr Fennemore, seconded Chair, Cllr C Turner, for all*

d. D. 24/O0902/FULHH. Drinkhouse Farm, Drinkhouse Road Croston PR26 9JH. Two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, formation of hard surfaces including driveway, landscaping, and 1m high access gate and wall to front boundary. *Proposed Cllr Fennemore, seconded Chair, Cllr Turner, for all.*

Re: planning applications c. and d. the Clerk will write to Chorley Council to request that amelioration be put in place to counter any increase in rainwater of the run-off due to the increase in hard standing.

8. Financial matters

a. Approve the financial statement as at 31/12/2024

The Former Acting Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer gave an overview of the financial statement. The bank balance at the end of this financial year is estimated to be c £5K. **It was resolved** the financial statement be approved. *Proposed Cllr Sloan, Seconded Chair, Cllr Turner, for Cllrs Almond, Fenemore. Abstained Cllr O’Kane.*

b. Approve the addition of new Clerk as an authorised signatory for the bank account and removal of Acting Clerk

It was resolved to add the new Clerk as an authorised signatory and remove the former Acting Clerk, at a time to be agreed between both officers. *Proposed Cllr Sloan, seconded Cllr Fenemore, for Cllrs Almond, Turner and O’Kane.*

c. Approve the increase in room hire charges by Croston Old School

It was resolved to accept the increase in charges to £15 per hour. *Proposed Cllr Fenemore, seconded Cllr Sloan, for Cllrs O’Kane, Chair, Cllr Turner. Abstained Cllr Almond (Trustee of Croston Old School).*

9. Payments to approve by email or pre-approved and retrospectively noted

It was resolved to approve the Information Commissioner’s Office data protection fee of £40. *Proposed Cllr Sloan, seconded Cllr Fenemore, unanimous.*

10. Approve MS365 annual subscription for new Clerk

It was resolved MS365 annual subscription be paid. *Proposed Cllr Sloan, seconded Cllr Fenemore, unanimous.*

11. Approve SLCC annual subscription for new Clerk

It was resolved the SLCC annual subscription be paid. *Proposed Cllr Fenemore, seconded Cllr Sloan, unanimous.*

12. Chair / Acting Clerk's item of urgent action: Replace the broken manhole cover on the Village Green

It was reported the work had been completed by Alistair Wade, due to the safety critical nature of the broken manhole cover. It is not known how the damage occurred. **It was resolved** and agreed the urgent work was required for safety reasons. *Proposed Chair, Cllr Turner, seconded Cllr Almond, for Cllrs Sloan and O'Kane. Abstained Cllr Fenemore. The Clerk will check the insurance documents to ascertain cover.*

13. Approve the Clerk's claim

It was resolved to approve the Clerk's claim for 17.15 hours and 34 miles. *Proposed Cllr Sloan, seconded Cllr Fenemore, unanimous.*

14. Approve Acting Clerk's claim

It was resolved to approve the Acting Clerk's claim for 42 hours and 36 miles; expenses £17 (stamps, keys for noticeboards). *Proposed Cllr Sloan, seconded Chair, Cllr Turner, for Cllrs Almond, Fenemore. Abstained Cllr O'Kane.*

15. Update from Paul Foster MP re: the public meeting on 17 January 2025

The Clerk reported no further communication had been received. **It was resolved** the Clerk will contact the MPs office for an update on his meeting with the Water and Flooding Minister, Emma Hardy.

16. Annual review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The Clerk reported that a recommendation from the Auditor stated the standing orders / financial regulations ought to be reviewed every three years. Feedback on the standing orders had been received by Cllr O'Kane, however the Clerk reported they were fit for purpose. **It was resolved** the standing orders and financial regulations be approved as fit for purpose. *Proposed Cllr Sloan, seconded Cllr Fenemore, for Cllrs Almond, Chair, Cllr Turner. Abstained Cllr O'Kane.*

17. Vacancy for Parish Councillor

Following Cllr Bannister's unexpected resignation, it was decided to advertise the vacancy for three weeks. Discussion took place regarding an approach by the Chair, Cllr Turner, to Ms Bannister to ask would she reconsider her resignation. Cllr Fenemore suggested to Cllr O'Kane that he apologise to Ms Bannister for his disruptive behaviour, but Cllr O'Kane refused to apologise. **It was resolved** the Chair would speak to Ms Bannister in the first instance to ask for a reconsideration of her resignation. *Proposed Cllr Sloan, seconded Cllr Fenemore, for Cllrs K Almond, Chair Cllr Turner. Abstained Cllr O'Kane.*

It was resolved the Clerk will draft an advert for the vacancy and post on the website / noticeboards.

18. Annual inspection of park

The Clerk advised the inspection will take place on 12 March by Wicksteed's at a cost of £150. **It was resolved** the inspection proceed.

19. Approve the submission to Chorley Western Parish's Neighbourhood Forum

Croston Together had prepared a grant claim to be submitted to Chorley Council (Western Parishes Neighbourhood Forum), to address the flooding in the early years section of the recreation park. An estimate for the work is in the region of c£5K. As the landowner, it is the parish council's responsibility to ensure draining is adequate. This will require a £1000 contribution from the Parish Council. The motion was proposed by Cllr Sloan but was not seconded, this motion was, therefore, rejected.

Due to the expiration of the two-hour meeting time, it was agreed by the Chair, Cllr Turner to extend the meeting to consider the remaining agenda items

20. Approve a grant application to LCCs Champion for Parish & Town Councils - St Michael and All Angels Church

The Clerk reported the grant application received was for retrospective payment for work done, which is not allowed under the grant rules. However, further electrical work had been identified, so the Clerk had sent Derek Alty the original grant application for amendment. **It was resolved** the grant application will be approved when received. *Proposed by Cllr Sloan, seconded by the Chair, Cllr Turner, unanimous.*

21. Initial discussions re: proposal by Croston Together to submit a grant application to the Lancashire Environmental Fund

The Acting Clerk reported a user of the recreation park had approached Neville Norcross, Croston Together about the provision of accessible equipment for disabled children. This would cost c £5K, of which the resident was intending to crowd fund £1K. There would be no cost to the parish council other than ongoing maintenance costs. **It was resolved** the parish council approve the submission of an application. *Proposed Cllr Fenemore, seconded Cllr Sloan, unanimous.*

22. Adoption of handheld radios

The Acting Clerk reported the parish council had been approached by Lower Yarrow Flood Action Group, to donate their handheld radios at no cost, other than batteries. Richard Guinness will continue to store the radios. **It was resolved** to accept the offer. *Proposed Cllr Almond seconded Cllr Sloan, unanimous.*

23. Appoint a parish council rep to Croston Festivities Null and void.

24. Chair's letter, quotes and costs: update

It was resolved to defer to the March meeting. *Proposed Cllr Sloan, seconded Cllr Fenemore, unanimous.*

25. VE day commemorations

It was resolved to defer to the March meeting. *Proposed Cllr Sloan, seconded Chair Cllr Turner, unanimous.*

26. Review of donations and grants policy

It was resolved to defer this item to the March meeting. *Proposed Cllr Sloan, seconded Chair Cllr Turner, unanimous.*

27. Confirmation of 2025 meeting dates

The Clerk advised the parish council of 2025 meeting dates:

- 12 March
- 9 April
- 14 May
- 18 June
- 9 July
- 10 September
- 8 October
- 11 November
- 10 December

28. Reports for outside bodies

The Chair, Cllr Turner circulated two reports from meetings attended.

- Chorley Liaison Committee meeting, 22 January 2025.
- LALC meeting, 4 November 2024.

Cllr Fenemore provided an update on the Douglas Catchment Area Meeting and the interest of Mawdesley U3A in environmental matters.

29. Correspondence

- Provision of a grit / salt bin at the railway crossing, Club Lane. A Parish Council response signposted the resident to LCC.
- Requests to fly the Pride flag during June. The Clerk had acknowledged two requests to fly the Pride flag on the village green 1 – 30 June 2025. **It was resolved** this item be put on the Agenda for the March meeting for a full discussion.
- Request to provide a bike pump track. **It was resolved** the Chair, Cllr Turner will call the resident.
- Cllr Strachan had received an enquiry, which the Clerk had acknowledged, from a resident of Rectory Close about inconsiderate parking, particularly during school drop off / pick up times. Cllr Strachan signposted and provided email addresses to the local Neighbourhood Policing Team, Croston Primary School and the Deputy headteacher at Bishop Rawstone high school.

30. Date of next meeting Wednesday 12 March 2025 at 7.30pm, the Old School, Croston