

**Minutes of the Croston Parish Council Meeting  
held on Wed 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024, at Croston Old School**

**In attendance:** Cllrs K Almond, P Sloan, P Strachan, C Titherington-Teale, C Turner, P Fenemore, C Worthington, Mr P Cafferkey (Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer);

Six members of the public were also in attendance.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllrs Cahill and Moulton.
2. **To agree the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024:** The minutes for the meeting held on the 14th Feb 2024 were approved as a true record.
3. **To receive declarations of interest:** None
4. **Public Participation:** A Peet, Chair of Croston in Bloom (CiB), informed the meeting that they would not be entering the Royal Horticultural Society Britain in Bloom competition in 2024. Also, extra funding will be needed for the plants this year due to the need for replacement compost. Last year, for the first time, peat free compost had been used, but this hadn't been very successful, so approximately 46 bags of new compost, in addition to plants, will be needed for 2024. CiB are largely up to date with their workplan. The Council thanked CiB and its volunteers for the wonderful work they do in the village, which contributes so much to the village at a fraction of the cost if the Parish Council had to pay for this work.

A Peet asked if CiB could use The Green for a plant sale on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May, this was agreed by the Council. Also, A. Peet is hosting an open garden event in her garden on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

County Councillor (CC) A Whittaker informed the meeting that a decision on the Croston Hall Farm planning application (Ref 23/00462/FULMAJ) was awaiting details as to landscaping and tree planting before Chorley Council Planning Committee would meet to make any decision. CC Whittaker also informed the meeting that a leaflet accompanying residents' Council Tax Bill informed residents about the Government's decision to make Chorley Council a "designated council". As regards, the proposed Wymott 3<sup>rd</sup> Prison, CC Whittaker expressed concern that any 3<sup>rd</sup> prison would cause traffic problems to local villages during construction and once operational there would be additional work traffic. The Clerk had already distributed information, which had arrived too late for this meeting's agenda, about the online virtual public enquiry to be held on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 10am.

A member of the public queried the Parish Council's increase in its precept for

2024-25 of 35.8%. The Council explained that whilst the percentage increase seemed high, in monetary terms the increase was quite small. For example, for a Band D property the annual increase between 2023-24 and 2024-25 was only £8.51. The increase was considered necessary to fund improvements to amenities under the responsibility of the Parish Council but also to help build a sufficient financial reserve, as recommended by the National Association of Local Councils, e.g.; for future unexpected expenditure. At present the Parish Council has no such reserve.

## 5. Planning Matters:

- a) 24/00180/CLPUD, Honeywood Finney Lane Croston PR26 9JQ, Application for a certificate of lawfulness for a proposed outbuilding (double garage with home workshop)
- b) 23/01033/FUL, Land at Back Drinkhouse Lane Croston, Stable block incorporating two stables and tack room
- c) 24/00060/FULHH, Holly Tree Cottage 5 Drinkhouse Road Croston, PR26 9JE, Single storey rear extension (following demolition of existing conservatory)

There were no objections to the above planning items.

## 6. Finance Update

- a) **Finance Report:** The Clerk presented the finance report which shows a forecast estimated balance at the end of the financial year (2023-24) of £16,427, of this, £15,322 relates to Community Infrastructure Levy monies. **It was resolved** that the finance report be approved.
- b) **It was resolved that** the National Savings and Investment account be closed and the balance be transferred to the Council's Unity Trust Bank Account. The Clerk was authorised to submit the necessary signed forms.
- c) **It was resolved** that the following transactions made through the Parish Council's bank account during the month of Feb 2024 be approved.

Date	£	Payee	Description
01-Feb-24	30.36	Direct Debit (GOCARDLESS)	website monthly fee
05-Feb-24	431.00	B/P to: MCB Print Ltd	printing of newsletter
05-Feb-24	1.89	B/P to: Pauline Strachan	card of condolence
05-Feb-24	459.00	B/P to: Countrywide Mntnce	grounds mntnce
06-Feb-24	324.96	B/P to: HMRC Cumbernauld	employees tax
06-Feb-24	152.56	B/P to: N Norcross	Materials re mntnce of recreation park
07-Feb-24	42.00	B/P to: Croston Old School	room hire
19-Feb-24	412.32	B/P to: Employee 2	Clerk's net pay tax mth 11
19-Feb-24	10.80	B/P to: Employee 2	Clerk's mileage tax mth 11
19-Feb-24	306.81	B/P to: Employee 1	Lengthsman net pay tax mth 11
19-Feb-24	15.54	B/P to: Employee 2	Clerk's expenses tax mth 11
20-Feb-24	420.00	B/P to: Ken Linford	The Green Trees Risk Assessment
20-Feb-24	414.00	B/P to: Yates Playgrounds	Repairs to children's play eqt

20-Feb-24	29.99	B/P to: Little Hoole PC	CPC Share of Clerk's MS365
20-Feb-24	236.06	B/P to: ex-employee	Backpay re pay award
22-Feb-24	82.86	B/P to: N Norcross	Materials re mntnce & repair children's play eqt

7. **Payments approved by email or pre-approved and retrospectively noted:**  
None
8. **To Review and Approve** Draft Parish Council Donation and Grant Policy. **It was resolved** that the Donation and Grant Policy be adopted and that a limit of £250.00 per organisation, per annum, be set; unless the Council considers that there are exceptional circumstances, in which case it can decide to exceed this limit. The Donation and Grant Policy will be posted on the Parish Council's website.
9. **Request for Donation** from Croft Field Volunteers for lawn mower service and running costs. **It was resolved** to make a donation of £250.00
10. **Clerk's Claim for Feb 2024: It was resolved** that the Clerk's claim for Feb of 19.87 hours, £5.40 mileage and expenses of £4.40 be approved.
11. **D-Day 80th Anniversary Commemorations 6<sup>th</sup> June:** The Chair outlined the arrangements proposed so far. This includes raising the Union Jack flag at 9am, music by a bagpiper, the possibility of musicians from Bishop Rawstorne playing the national anthem, and hopefully the ringing of church bells at 18:30. The Council was unanimous in its support of this commemoration.
12. **Parish Council Notice Boards:** It was agreed to obtain quotes for a new double replacement notice board on The Green and a replacement notice board on Station Road.
13. **Reports From Outside Bodies:** Cllr Turner had attended the Western Parishes Neighbourhood Area Meeting; she reported that Chorley Council has committed an approximate £8k budget to support local priorities in the Western Parishes.
14. **Outcome of the Risk Assessment of the Trees on The Green:** It was agreed to obtain quotes for the work outlined in the Risk Assessment Report. The possibility that volunteers from The Men's Shed could cut down the dead tree (T4) was raised by Cllr Fenemore. The Clerk informed that he would check the Parish Council's insurance detail and report back on findings on this.
15. **Planning Application 23/00113/FUL, The Crown Station Road Croston:** there was no update on this planning application.
16. **Renovation Project, Including Removal of Bug Hotel:** Cllr Fenemore reported that volunteers from the Men's Shed had removed the Bug Hotel, with residents being given temporary accommodation, whilst the Men's Shed constructed two

new Bug Hotels. The Council is waiting for two quotes for the renovation work regarding the hedging on The Green and awaiting a quote on the renovation of the metal work (chains, bollards, signpost) at The Green.

17. **The Grapes Pub:** The new owners of the Grapes Pub have been in contact with the Parish Council to inform them that a barrier to the car park had been installed and to inform users of the Church the code to the barrier, as there is a covenant regarding the car park allowing visitors to Church services to park on the Grapes car park.
18. **Town Bridge:** Correspondence has been received from Lancashire County Council to confirm that Town Bridge is safe and that no repairs are to take place due to the possibility of unintended consequences resulting from such repairs because of the age of the bridge. Cllr Fenemore reported that there is evidence that the stone setts on the bridge have sunk and he agreed to write an email summary on this that could be sent to LCC.
19. **Parish Council Newsletter:** The Clerk reported that the four newsletters cost approx. £2400 per year. In order to reduce costs, **it was resolved** that the Parish Council Newsletter would be reduced from four to three editions per annum.
20. **Parish Council's Role in Event of Future Flooding in Respect of the Lower Yarrow Flood Action Group's (LYFAG) Reduced Involvement:** Due to time constraints this item was deferred, although the Clerk agreed to try and obtain more information regarding the Chorley Making Space for Water Group Meetings.
21. **Volunteers:** The Parish Council expressed its appreciation for all the volunteers that contribute to the village and would give further thought as to how they might be recognised.
22. **Correspondence:** An anonymous thank you card had been received thanking the Parish Council for its website.
23. **Date of Next Meeting:** Wed 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024, 7.30pm, Croston Old School.