

Minutes of Croston Parish Council Meeting held on Wed 8th January 2025, at Croston Old School.

In attendance: Cllrs P Sloan, K Almond, C Turner, C Baines, P. Strachan, C.Titherington-Teale, D O’Kane and P Fenemore. Mr P Cafferkey (Acting Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer). Nineteen members of the public were also in attendance.

1. **Apologies for Absence** none – all present (one vacancy)
2. **Declarations of Interests** None
3. **Minutes of the Last Parish Council Meeting:** It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on the 11th Dec 2024 were agreed as a correct record. This was proposed by Cllr Baines, seconded by Cllr Strachan. Also agreed by Cllrs Sloan, Titherington-Teale, Almond, and Chair, Cllr C. Turner. Abstained, Cllrs. Fenemore and O’Kane.

Standing Orders and financial regulations were suspended for a period of Public Participation

4. **Public Participation:** to invite and listen to issues raised by members of the public.

Planning Matter: Chorley Borough Cllr Alan Whittaker was in attendance to bring the attention of the Parish Council, and members of the public, to planning item 23/00462/FULMAJ Croston Hall Farm. This is a proposal “for the erection of 4 no. livestock buildings, 2 no. uncovered storage clamps, 1 no. building comprising crop store, workshop and office together with vehicular access and associated yard area.” Cllr Whittaker noted Croston Parish Council had (Nov 2023) previously written to Chorley Council in respect of planning application 23/00462/FULMAJ (Croston Hall Farm) with particular regard to the plastic bollards at the junction of Turflands/Carr Lane. The Parish Council at that time (Nov 2023) requested the plastic bollards be replaced with more substantial bollards (e.g. metal bollards) to provide a greater deterrence to vehicles, in particular large/heavy vehicles accessing Croston Hall Farm, from running over the verges, especially given that on one side of this junction there is a public bench. The Parish Council, in Nov 2023 felt that the cost of replacing the bollards should be borne by the planning applicant and be made a condition of approving the application. Supplementary details regarding planning application 23/00462/FULMAJ can be found on Chorley Planning website and is to be considered at its Planning Cttee on 14th Jan 2025.

Flooding in Croston: Several Croston residents expressed their views on the recent New Year’s Day flooding. Various discussions were held on the closing of the Penstocks. Consensus of opinion from those present was that the Penstock closing procedure was triggered far too late and needed adjusting. Resident reported that the Environment Agency review of the timings has still not been published; been waiting for three years. Cllr Sloan reported that the Environment Agency (EA) was not represented at the recent Making Space for Water meeting at which he and Cllr Almond were intending to address the EA regarding the Dam. This meeting will now take place at a later date. Discussions were held on the dam capacity and why the EA were only allowing the dam to fill to 54% and questioned why the dam could not

be kept closed for longer to impound more water there, rather than allowing it to flow down into Croston. Residents also reported that they only received flood alerts and no one received a flood warning – why?. Resident reported that United Utilities (UU) had taken measurements of the flood heights, but other residents remarked that UU should attend Croston when in flood and not days later. Cllr Fenemore reported that he did attend the recent Making Space for Water meeting, and he felt that his report had been well received. He hoped United Utilities had taken on board the issues he had raised. Also, residents reported that surface water drains were identified as being blocked at several points in Croston and Lancashire County Council Highways need to be more proactive in ensuring that the drains are regularly checked and cleared. Another resident raised the issue of false information being written on social media regarding the farmers affected by the Dam. The resident's relative, as one of these farmers, received an initial payment and he wanted it to be known that he does not receive further payments when the dam is in operation. Another resident stated that he believes that one of the costs when the dam is in use, is in the region of £4000 per activation of the dam, for reservoir inspection. Discussion was held by a resident living closer to Church St about the Lancashire County Council (LCC) portable pump that was previously stored at the Old School and operated on the flags, by the footbridge. Cllr Sloan confirmed that the pump had not been sold, it was in storage at a LCC depot. He reported that there is an impasse between the Old School and LCC regarding the use of the pump i.e. the Old School do not want it 'dragging' across the 'new' stone flags but across some form of boarding, whereas LCC require the pump to be moved on a solid foundation due to the safety aspect. The general consensus was that this needed resolving quickly, including where to store it on site, and volunteers to move and operate it. The resident confirmed that in the past when the pump had been used, it had been effective. Residents also reported that the valves in the river wall were not operating correctly and to their knowledge they have not been repaired or replaced.

No 3rd Prison: A representative from the 'No 3rd Prison' reported that the Secretary of State had given permission to appeal the recent Government approval to build the 3rd prison. He was appealing for pledges towards the possible £10,000 legal costs if the appeal is unsuccessful. Approx. £8500 has been pledged so far.

Standing Orders and financial regulations were reinstated following the period of Public Participation

- 5. To discuss New Year's Day Flooding:** In view of the issues raised by local residents **it was resolved** that the Parish Council would accept the offer of a public meeting with Mr Paul Foster MP on Friday 17th January 2025 at 15:30. Venue to be confirmed – but likely to be the Old School. Proposed Cllr P. Sloan, seconded Cllr Strachan, the decision was unanimous.

- 6. Planning Matters:**

24 /01082/FULHH. 20 Rectory Close PR26 9SH. Single storey side/rear extension (following demolition of garage).

Council noted the above planning application and there were no objections.

- 7. Financial Matters**

- a. Clerk gave a brief overview of the finances as at 30th November 2024 and the bank balance at the end of the financial year is estimated to be circa £5,000. **It was resolved** that the financial statement be approved. Proposed by Cllr Baines, seconded by Cllr Strachan. Also agreed by Cllrs Sloan, Titherington-Teale, Almond, and Chair, Cllr C. Turner. Abstained, Cllrs. Fenemore and O'Kane
- b. **Changes to the signatories to the Council's Bank Account. It was resolved** to remove Cllr Strachan, at her request, and replace with Cllr Baines. Proposed by Chair Cllr Turner and seconded by Cllr Strachan. Also agreed by Cllrs Sloan, Titherington-Teale, Almond and Fenemore, Cllr C. Turner. Abstained, Cllr. O'Kane.
- c. **Approve the following transactions processed through the Parish Council bank account in Nov & Dec 2024. It was resolved** that the following transactions be approved. Proposed by Cllr Strachan, seconded by Cllr Sloan, Also agreed by Cllrs Titherington-Teale, Almond, Baines and Chair, Cllr C. Turner. Abstained, Cllrs. Fenemore and O'Kane

Date	£	Payee	Description
01-Nov-24	36.96	Direct Debit (GOCARDLESS)	Website monthly subscription
01-Nov-24	-550.90	CHORLEY BC CR	CIL Income
13-Nov-24	2,379.00	B/P to: Signs of Cheshire	New Parish Council Noticeboard
13-Nov-24	6,000.00	B/P to: John McDougall	Electrics for The Green
13-Nov-24	30.00	B/P to: Croston Old School	Rental of Hall
13-Nov-24	1,060.80	B/P to: Countrywide Mntnce	Winter Mntnce on the Park
18-Nov-24	22.35	B/P to: Employee 2	Employee 2 Expenses Tax Mth 8
18-Nov-24	315.72	B/P to: Employee 1	Salary Tax Mth 8
18-Nov-24	591.92	B/P to: Employee 2	Salary Tax Mth 8
18-Nov-24	154.35	B/P to: Amy Evans	Locum Clerk
18-Nov-24	300.00	B/P to: Croft Field	Bio Diversity Grant to Craft Field
18-Nov-24	34.40	B/P to: Cllr Turner	Cllr Travel expenses re LALC mtg
18-Nov-24	10.80	B/P to: Paul Cafferkey	Employee 2 Mileage Tax Mth 8
30-Nov-24	6.00	Service Charge	Bank Charges
02-Dec-24	36.96	Direct Debit (GOCARDLESS)	Website monthly subscription
11-Dec-24	360.00	B/P to: A Wade	Erection of Noticeboards
11-Dec-24	516.00	B/P to: John Mayor & Sons	Christmas Tree
11-Dec-24	1,380.00	B/P to: Countrywide Mntnce	Grounds Mntnce
11-Dec-24	36.00	B/P to: Croston Old School	Rental of Hall
17-Dec-24	315.72	B/P to: Employee 1	Salary Tax Mth 9
17-Dec-24	183.14	B/P to: Employee 2	Salary Tax Mth 9
17-Dec-24	5.40	B/P to: Employee 2	Employee 2 Mileage Tax Mth 9
17-Dec-24	1.40	B/P to: Employee 2	Employee 2 Expenses Tax Mth 9
31-Dec-24	6.00	Service Charge	Bank Charges

8. **Payments approved by email or pre-approved and retrospectively noted: None**

9. **Acting Clerk's claim for Dec 2024. It was resolved** to approve the Acting Clerk's claim for Dec 2024 of 19.4 hours, mileage of 12 miles and expenses of £2.10. Proposed Cllr Baines, seconded by Cllr Titherington-Teale and agreed by Cllrs Almond, Strachan, Sloan & Chair Cllr Turner. Abstained Cllrs Fenemore & O'Kane
10. **To confirm appointment of new Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer**
Remaining members of public (2) were excluded from this item and left the room. **It was resolved** that the recommendation of the interview panel, as to the candidate to be appointed as the new Clerk, be accepted. And, that the new Clerk be appointed on Spinal Column point 21 of the NALC pay scales for 2024-25. Proposed by Cllr Baines, seconded by Cllr Sloan, also agreed by Cllrs Titherington-Teale, Strachan, Chair Cllr Turner, Almond & Fenemore. Abstained Cllr O'Kane. The Acting Clerk reported that he has received two very good references in respect of the new Clerk.
11. **Parish Councillor Vacancy: It was resolved that** an advert would be displayed in noticeboards and on the website with a deadline of 3 weeks from date of display for applications. Proposed by Cllr Strachan, seconded by Cllr Baines, and unanimously agreed.
12. **To discuss Bus Service consultation** The Clerk encouraged Councillors to contact LCC and encourage users of public transport to give their views to Lancashire County Council.
13. **Parish Council Annual Commitments:** Cllr Strachan (as retired Chair) informed the Council of the routine essential tasks that need to be carried out during the year, outlining the responsibilities of the Chair (now Cllr Turner) to lead and liaise with the designated person(s) to ensure commitments are completed in the allocated time slots. List of annual commitments to be distributed.
14. **Damaged Parish Council Noticeboard** Clerk reported that the notice board on the Morrisons shop wall is damaged beyond repair. Possible replacement to be listed as a future agenda item.
15. **To approve annual hedge cutting on The Green. It was resolved** that the lowest quote from A. Wade in the sum of £420.00 (incl VAT) be accepted. Proposed by Cllr Strachan, seconded by Cllr Titherington-Teale, also agreed by Cllrs Sloan, Baines, Almond, Chair Cllr Turner. Abstained Cllrs Fenemore & O'Kane. A second, higher quote had been obtained, in the sum of £500 (incl VAT).
16. **To agree reimbursement of £21.43. It was resolved** to reimburse Richard Guinness the sum of £21.43 for a new replacement battery for one handheld radio, part of a group of 8 radios, which the Parish Council and residents use for events e.g. Remembrance Sunday. Proposed by Cllr Titherington-Teale, seconded by Cllr Almond, unanimously agreed by all councillors.
17. **Future of Parish Newsletter. It was resolved** that the Chair Cllr Turner would write a Chair's letter in place of the Spring Newsletter. Cllr Titherington-Teale kindly

agreed to arrange printing and distribution to Croston residents. Proposed by Cllr Titherington-Teale, seconded by Cllr Baines, and agreed by Cllrs Strachan, Sloan, Chair Cllr Turner, Fenemore, O'Kane. Abstained Cllr Almond.

18. **Neighbourhood Area Group Meetings** It was agreed that the Chair Cllr Turner would attend the Neighbourhood Area Group Meetings.
19. **Chorley Liaison Mtg: Wed 22 Jan 2025, 6.30pm, Chorley Town Hall.**
 - a. It was agreed that the Chair Cllr Turner would be the representative at this meeting.
 - b. **It was resolved** to accept the offer of help from Croston Together (Mr N Norcross) to help compile a grant claim for improvement(s) to drainage on the Recreation Park. Proposed by Cllr Strachan, seconded by Cllr Sloan and agreed by Cllr Almond, Titherington-Teale, Baines, Chair Cllr Turner, & O'Kane. Abstained Cllr Fenemore. Clerk apologised that this item should have been listed under item 18.
20. **Fallen Tree Incident: re Grape Lane.** Clerk reported that he had received a **positive** response from Lancashire County Council to inspect similar trees to that which had fallen on to Grape Lane and to inspect the wall adjacent to the highway where the tree had fallen.
21. **To confirm dates of Parish Council meetings for 2025.** It was agreed that this agenda item would be listed on the February Agenda so as to take account of any commitments that the new Clerk may have.
22. **Reports from outside bodies.** Remaining members of public (2) were excluded from this item and left the room. Discussion took place about the signing of the Acceptance of Office Form required to be signed by any new Councillor.
23. **Correspondence:**
 - a. Report from member of public re narrowing of footpath due to vegetation on Moor Road. This was reported by The Lengthsman to the Clerk and it was agreed it needed to be reported to LCC.
 - b. Correspondence has been received from Lancashire Police / LCC that signage/pole installations are likely to be erected outside the entrance to the Recreation Park, which will hopefully prevent vehicles from driving along the pavement.
24. **Date of Next Meeting:** Wed 12th February 2025, 7.30pm, Croston Old School.

Approved as a true and accurate record.

Councillor Caroline Turner, Chair

12 February 2024

