

Preston Brook Parish Council

MINUTES OF PRESTON BROOK ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT 8:30PM ON TUESDAY 22 OCTOBER 2024 AT PRESTON BROOK VILLAGE HALL,
SANDY LANE, PRESTON BROOK, CHESHIRE, WA7 3AW.

Members Present:

A Price, J Walton, C Murray, K Dainty, M Marlow, P Bolton, L Sanders, L Hewlett.

Also Present:

Luke Trevaskis - Proper Officer, and 6 members of the public.

1. Apologies

None.

2. Declarations

Cllr Alan Price noted an interest in Preston Brook Village Hall.

Cllr Kerry Dainty and Cllr Liam Hewlett noted an interest in the proposal for future partnership working with Heatherfield Heritage on the 250th Anniversary of the Preston Brook Tunnel.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the prior meeting were approved.

5. Police

Members noted that there had not been a report received from the Police.

6. Public Realm

An update was received regarding the £3K that had been allocated for open space improvement works. The Council noted a new contractor had been identified for Bridgewater Grange and there has been an agreed scope of works. Members noted that the contractor had agreed to commence works at the beginning of November. Members agreed that if in the event it transpires the new contractor is unable to undertake the work, the Council delegated to the PO to source a new contractor. It was agreed that the bamboo on Bridgewater Grange should be removed completely.

Members received an update regarding the planters, and noted a contractor had been sourced by the PO to lay a foundation for the planters to sit on. PO to facilitate this work to coincide with delivery, and order soil and instruct a contractor to plant up the planters with winter bedding plants and support their ongoing maintenance with at least a monthly visit to weed and water.

It was noted that Jimmy Unsworth has confirmed the additional boulders for Bridgewater Grange would be provided by Halton BC within the coming weeks.

The Council noted a contractor had been instructed to fell the Horse Chestnut Tree.

The Council noted the length of time it had taken to receive the cast iron planters, since the order was placed some 6+ months ago. With this in mind, members were encouraged to give early consideration to projects which could be undertaken in the next financial year, to ensure that orders could be placed as soon as possible. It was noted that some areas could be improved with replacement planters, benches, and interpretation boards celebrating the heritage of the Parish.

7. Finance

The Council approved Q2 budget report and bank reconciliation for FY2425.

8. Planning

The Council noted that liaison between Halton BC and the developer regarding Planning Application 22/00203/FUL had still not concluded.

The Council agreed to continue working on its objection, subject to receipt of final documentation.

The Council agreed to submit the letter to Halton Borough Council regarding the additional signage that had appeared outside the Spar, noting its inappropriateness for the area.

The Council agreed to submit a letter of the same to the manager of the Spar, and its head office.

9. Ward Councillor Report - members noted that both Cllr Colin Hughes and Cllr Martha Lloyd-Jones had sent apologies. Members thanks Cllr Colin Hughes, in his absence, for all the prompt responses to case work he had obtained from officers at Halton BC, and for his positive approach to working with Preston Brook PC.

10. Highways - members noted that there had been no consultation with the Parish Council regarding Halton BC's Cycle Route consultation which took place in October 2023. Halton BC has been requested to clarify why the Parish Council did not receive an invitation to respond. Members requested an update regarding the repositioning of the SPID.

11. Conservation Status / Neighbourhood Plan

The Council agreed to hold a Neighbourhood Plan Consultation evening on 26 November 2024, between 6-8pm, and approved for a poster to be printed for the noticeboards and lampposts. All residents were encouraged to attend.

Members agreed for the additional information obtained by Cllr Kerry Dainty to be submitted to the Council's Conservation Consultants, for inclusion in the Appraisal document.

Cllr Kerry Dainty agreed to clarify whether any consultants existed who could provide a reputable historical opinion on the legitimacy of some assertions relating to the importance of the Preston Brook Tunnel in the success of the Liverpool docklands and their trade.

12. Heatherfield Heritage

The Council agreed to pursue the proposed event to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the Preston Brook Tunnel. PO to cost up all activities and apply for grants to support the event.

13. ChALC

The Council agreed that 'ChALC' should become a standing item.

The Council congratulated Cllr Cathy Murray on becoming the latest member of the ChALC Executive Board - securing the second highest number of votes from all attendees at the Annual Meeting.

The Council expressed dissatisfaction regarding the handling of its motions for the AGM by ChALC (Cheshire Association of Local Councils). Despite submitting its motions for the July 4 deadline, the Council was informed 12 weeks later that its motions were rejected as improper. This delay, along with the lack of opportunity to amend the motions or discuss them in open sessions, raised concerns about the

transparency, accountability, and democratic processes within ChALC. Furthermore, it was noted that other Cheshire councils' motions were accepted, and Preston Brook Parish Council was the only Council whose motions were excluded from progressing to debate at the AGM.

The Council's frustrations extend to ChALC's guidance, which promise an opportunity for member councils to engage in policy-making discussions, which they do not fulfil in practice.

ChALC's restrictive approach contrasts with more inclusive practices from other associations, such as the Lancashire Association of Local Councils, where all submitted motions are put forward to the AGM.

The Council agreed to seek clarification from NALC (National Association of Local Councils) on whether ChALC's actions align with democratic principles and standard practices, emphasising the need for fair representation and a voice in decision-making processes.

The Council agreed to meet up with other parish councils in the area to discuss mutual matters of concern.

The Council also agreed to submit a response to the Department for Education's Call for Evidence, to increase the awareness and promotion of the parish council sector within mainstream education.

14. Next Meetings

It was noted that the next meetings of the Council would be held on:

Tuesday 26 November 2024 at 8.30pm

15. Public Forum

PARKING

Several residents expressed thanks regarding the Chairman's actions in relation to the parking at Bridgewater Grange. It was understood Morris Homes had written to some residents and the matter had now been resolved.

SPAR SIGNAGE

A resident reiterated their dissatisfaction with the new Spar signage, and thanked the Council for preparing its letters of objection.

MINUTES

It was noted that minutes would be published on the Council's website after they had been approved at the following meeting.

Signed as a true record

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Chairperson