

**PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Proceedings of a Meeting of**

**Preston Parish Council**

**held at the Preston Community Hall, Main Street, Preston**

**10 July 2023**

Present: Councillor S Gallant in the Chair  
Councillors: J Dennis, S McMaster, S Steel, S Whyte  
Clerk: Kim Gray, Parish Clerk (interim)

010723 To elect Chairman

**Resolved:** that the Council unanimously elected Ward Cllr J Dennis to Chairman this meeting

020723. Apologies for Absence  
All Members were present.

030723. Declaration of Interests  
3.1 It was agreed that any declaration of interest be dealt with at the time the relevant item was discussed.  
3.2 There were no dispensations to be noted. None.

040723. Public Participation  
A member of the public, having viewed the accounts, was disappointed to discover that in the financial year 2020/21 the Council spent approximately 50% of the precept on purchasing play equipment for Preston playing field, significantly reducing the reserves. The same resident also pointed out that the £4,000 in commuted sums due to Preston Parish Council were never drawn down.  
A second resident asked questions about the Governance Report from the same financial year and pointed out that it appeared the Clerk at that time was out of her depth.  
Residents asked if the previous Councillors would be allowed to return to the Council. There is nothing to prevent them standing at election or applying to be co-opted.  
Questions were asked about fines related to the issues identified in the Annual Governance and Annual Report documents. The Council received a County Court Judgement for not meeting the audit requirements and this cost own paid by the Parish Council.  
Ex-councillors in attendance pointed out that some of the Councillors who were members of the Council when the issue came to light were relatively newly joined and the matters under discussion occurred before they took office. Those Councillors were working with the Interim Clerk to put the Council on a solid footing again and were committed to this course of action by standing again at the May election. It was noted that the past could not be changed and that the focus should be on the future.

050723. Confirming/Receiving the Minutes

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The Minutes of the meeting of the Preston Parish Council held on 19 June 2023 were confirmed.

**Resolved:** that the Minutes were received and remind unconfirmed.

060723.

Clerk's Report and Correspondence

The Clerk's report had previous been circulated. In addition to the report the Clerk had received an email from Lorraine West on behalf of the Preston Village Community Group, asking if the Council would support the Preston Show 2023 as they usual do each year with a financial contribution. Although this was not an agenda item Council agreed in principle to contribute £300 to the Preston Show and would ratify the decision at the next Council meeting.

070723.

To approve payment schedule for July 2023

The Schedule previously circulated to Members, will form part of the Minutes.

**Resolved:** that the schedules of payments for July 2023, signed, in the sum of £2,617.50, was approved.

080723.

To receive an update on the financial position of the Council at 30 June 2023

The Chairman referred to the documents attached to these Minutes which had been circulated to all Councillors; the documents indicated the financial position of the Council as at 30 June 2023.

**Resolved:** that the schedules showing receipts/payments made during July were approved.

090723

To acknowledge the External Auditor Public Interest Reports

Cllr Gallant summarised the issues identified in the reports, which are available to view on the Council website. of the findings of the external auditor to the meeting. The Council has prepared an action plan to address the issues contained in the report. The Council approved the action plan and would make this available on the Council's website.

**Resolved:** that the Council noted the Public Interest Reports.

**Resolved:** to approve the prepared action plan to rectify the governance and financial failing in the reports.

100723

Update on anticipated cash flow

The Chairman noted the update cash flow previously circulated.

**Resolved:** that the Council note the update.

110723

Update on empty Council seats

The Clerk reporteded that Electoral Service confirmed that the 6 vacant seats in Preston North Ward will be going to election. All nomination papers must be lodged with Electoral Services by 4pm on the 21 July 2023. The remain 4 seats in Preston North Ward and the 3 seats in Preston South Ward can now be co-opted. It was noted that if more than 6 nominations were received an election would be called and this would incur further cost for the Parish Council, approximately £4,500.

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120723

## Update on the recruitment of a new Clerk

The Clerk had prepared the necessary documents to move forward with the recruitment of a new Clerk. The Council approved the Clerk's advert, job description, person specification, application form and guidance notes. After due consideration the Council agreed that the new role would be offered with 21hr per week plus 2hrs for the monthly Council meeting, at pay scale point 20

**Resolved:** that the Council approved the advertisement and accompanying paperwork to recruitment a new Parish Clerk 21 hours per week, plus 2 hours per month for the Council meeting at the NJC pay scale point 20.

130723

## Update on Bank Mandate and account signatories

The Clerk confirmed that the bank had set up a mandate but would only include the Clerk and the Ward Councillor named a Chairman in the minutes of the last meeting. The Clerk and Cllr Steve Gallant would provide the necessary ID.

**Resolved:** that Ward Councillor S Gallant and the Clerk would be added to the Council bank account as signatories.  
as Parish Councillor Members until the matter was resolved.

140723

## Members' points of information and items for the next agenda

The next meeting of the Council would be called at a date dependant on the outcome of the election. A meeting may be required in August but the Clerk will inform Councillor once the situation surround the election is clear if this was necessary, otherwise the meeting would be 11 September.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

## PAYMENT SCHEDULE JULY 2023

DESCRIPTION	NET	VAT	GROSS
Pension - July	£ 36.54	£ -	£ 36.54
Salary - July	£ 1,691.39	£ -	£ 1,691.39
PAYE/NI	£ 466.86	£ -	£ 466.86
Fuel	£ 217.85	£ 10.89	£ 228.74
Internet/phone	£ 119.98	£ 23.99	£ 143.97
Incorrect - credit being applied, see next months bill			
Petty Cash	£ 50.00	£ -	£ 50.00
	<b>£ 2,582.62</b>	<b>£ 34.88</b>	<b>£ 2,617.50</b>