



WHITTINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Agenda for Thursday 9th April 2026 at 7.15pm
in Goosnargh Village Hall – downstairs
Please note the car park will not be available

1. APOLOGIES

- 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** of the Council meeting held on 12th Mar 2026.
The Chairman is required to sign the attached Minutes as a true record.

3. TO ACCEPT DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND TO CONSIDER ANY WRITTEN REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any interests in respect of matters contained in the agenda noting that there may be statutory restrictions on the right to participate and vote on that matter – see Standing Order 2023 (13) or (2025 3u)

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Invitations to attend have been sent to the Police, County and City Councillors.

Members of the public wishing to raise matters in accordance with Standing Order 2023 (3e & g) should raise them here. This is a time limited session at the discretion of the Chairman.

NOTE: The Council cannot make a decision or support a scheme unless the matter has been included on the agenda.

5. REPLACEMENT CLERK

Under MIN 25/26.156 of the March meeting, Members confirmed the appointment of Mr Thorpe and Mrs Buttle commenced the handover and induction sessions w/c 23rd March.

Further to MIN 25/26.157 a draft Employment Contract - based on the NALC 2025 template – was drawn up by Cllr Price. Mr Thorpe has reviewed the Contract which will be circulated to Members once the last few amendments have been agreed.

Mr Thorpe and the Chairman are required to sign the Employment Contract.

Mr Thorpe will take the April Minutes and will continue as Clerk to the Parish Council, supported by Mrs Buttle until the 17th April - as agreed under MIN 25/26.132 d) ii.

Mrs Buttle will receive her final salary on the 17th April when her P45 will be issued.

Mr Thorpe will receive his April salary (plus payment for the hours worked in March) on the 30th April in accordance with his Contract of Employment.

As previously agreed, under MIN 25/26.132 d) iii Mrs Buttle will complete the 2025/26 Audit, invoicing the Council separately for any hours worked at her existing rate of pay.

6. STANDING ORDERS

Standing Orders are written rules essential to regulate the proceedings of Council meetings.

Whittingham's Standing Orders were adopted in May 2023 with a minor amendment in May 2025. A copy can be viewed on the [Parish Council's website](#).

NALC have updated the model version which both Clerks have considered in full. The drafting notes confirm that all model standing orders will generally be suitable for councils.

Whilst Whittingham does not hold formal meetings with rules of debate and motions, these elements are retained in case the need arises. The same applies to committees and sub committees. Standing Orders which are duplicated in the Financial Regulations have been removed and going forwards, the Financial Regulation paragraph will be referred to.

The 2025 updated NALC version is **attached** with Whittingham specific alterations highlighted in blue and a policy consideration in red.

Council is required to adopt Standing Orders using the 2025 model so that questions and queries can be referred to NALC by quoting the relevant section number.

7. SLCC MEMBERSHIP & TRAINING

The Council has previously supported Mrs Buttle's Membership to the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) - an organisation which provides training, advice and model template documents to assist the Clerk in their role. Consequently, it is recommended that Membership is continued.

As Mrs Buttle worked for 2 parishes, the Membership fee was paid pro-rata by both Whittingham and Goosnargh Councils, with Whittingham's share being £240.00. As a new Clerk, Mr Thorpe's Membership is £253 plus a £15 joining fee.

In order to access model documents required for the induction process, in her capacity as retiring Clerk, Mrs Buttle used delegated authority to activate Mr Thorpe's membership.

Council is required to approve the Clerk's SLCC Membership, noting that the invoice has been paid in accordance with Financial Regulation 5.15.

The Clerk's Contract of Employment is conditional on the Clerk agreeing to work towards the Certificate in Local Council Administration. (CILCA). The **attached** leaflet confirms that students must be in post for a minimum of 12 months before they commence the training, then they have 12 months to submit an evidence-based portfolio before they qualify.

To assist Clerks during the first few months, the SLCC provides an online course - Introduction to Local Council Administration (ILCA). The Course takes approx. 10hrs to complete and is designed to be a good foundation for those aspiring to complete CILCA.

Members are requested to approve the Clerk's enrolment on the ILCA course at a cost of £140.00 plus VAT.

In addition to the SLCC training, the Lancashire Association of Local Councils runs various courses on Tuesdays – details of which were emailed to Members on 17th March.

Members are requested to advise if they wish to attend any of the courses and approve the Clerk's attendance on 3 Data Protection and GDPR courses at a cost of £20 each.

8. PURCHASE OF COUNCIL EQUIPMENT

Further to Mrs Buttle decision to retire, under MIN 25/26.119 b) of the January meeting Council resolved to purchase a laptop and a council phone as detailed in the **attached** report.

- a) **Council is required to approve the cost of the laptop and accessories, noting that the Clerk has been reimbursed for the purchase.**
- b) **Council is required to approve the upgrade to the Microsoft 365 account and finance the additional cost.**
- c) **Members are requested to confirm the Council's requirements in relation to the purchase of a mobile phone.**

9. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POLICY

As the Clerk has been issued with a Council laptop, the Council needs to amend and update the Information Technology Policy adopted on the 22nd May 2025.

Members are requested to consider the updated policy.

10. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S RISK PROCEDURES

The above items relate to the loss of an experienced CILCA qualified Clerk. In addition, the purchase and use of Council owned equipment - and the proposed use of a corporate debit card (agenda item 15) - pose additional risks to the Council. Consequently, it is recommended that the Council's risk register is reviewed.

It was also noted at the March meeting that Cllr Price would like to review the Council's approach to risk in relation to the 2026/27 municipal year.

Council is requested to NOTE that the above should be actioned as soon as the Clerk completes the relevant ILCA module, with any changes to be collectively agreed by Council.

11. 2025/26 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT AND RECEIPTS

Members are required to NOTE the following invoices already paid in accordance with para 7.10 of the adopted Financial Regulations

Balance of the Church CIL payment	Trinity Methodist	£24,014	REF 154
Tree maintenance at Beacon Drive	Greenbanks	£948.00	REF 155
Lengthsman March 2026	Mark Cornforth	£486.00	REF 156
SLCC Membership	SLCC	£268.00	REF 157
Purchase of a Council Laptop	M Thorpe	£742.34	REF 158

12. FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1st – 31st March 2026

The Chairman is requested to verify that the monthly finance statement has been reconciled against the bank statements.

Members are required to approve the attached End of Year Finance Statement so that the accounts can be passed to the Internal Auditor for inspection.

13. 2025/26 CIL END OF YEAR SUMMARY

Members are requested to approve the attached CIL End of Year Report.

14. 2026/27 ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES

As retiring Clerk, Mrs Buttle has openly acknowledged that the use of spreadsheets and the presentation of the Council's accounts is outdated and the March 2024 Minutes, confirm that Mrs Buttle trialled an electronic accounting package with Scribe.

The trial was put on hold following the announcement that the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd (SAAA) would be moving the Annual Governance and Accounting Reports (AGAR) to a fully digital platform to strengthen accuracy, improve efficiency and make statutory reporting easier. The SLCC have confirmed that a live trial is scheduled for the 2025/26 AGAR year, with full rollout planned for 2026/27.

Based on the above, and confirmation that the Scribe package is fully compatible with the digitised AGAR, Mrs Buttle has recommended that the Clerk starts using Scribe from April 2026.

The Clerk is scheduled to attend a training session on the 7th April and will provide verbal feedback to the Council including a summary of the costs involved.

Members are requested to consider the above information, acknowledge the use of Scribe as a sector specific product and approve the cost of using of their services.

Following the update of Councillor signatories on the CCLA account, Council is required to approve and sign the change of correspondent form for the Clerk to access both the CCLA account and the Unity Trust account.

15. CORPORATE DEBIT CARD

Para 9.1 of the adopted Financial Regulations state that personal credit or debit cards shall not be used except for expenses of up to £250 including VAT incurred in accordance with council policy. Members are requested to **note** that an exception was made to allow the purchase of a laptop from Currys who do not offer sales by Invoice.

As several companies - including Microsoft 365 - require payment by a debit card, the Clerk requests that Council considers purchasing a corporate debit card attached to the Unity Trust account, which will incur an initial setup fee of £50 and a monthly fee of £3.

16. 2026/27 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT AND RECEIPTS

Clerk Salary Apr	M Thorpe	To be advised	PAYE tools for 2026/27 Can't be updated until the 6 th April which is after the agenda is issued
PAYE	HMRC		
Employer Nat Ins	HMRC		
Pension	Nest		
Grounds maintenance	Millars	£840.00	
Football pitch mowing	Millars	£204.00	

17. GOOSNARGH & WHITTINGHAM FESTIVAL

As in previous years, a donation request has been received for £500 towards the Goosnargh & Whittingham Festival.

Members are requested to consider granting the donation which is included in the 2026/27 budget.

18. PLANNING MATTERS

Members are requested to confirm the delegated representation on

06/2026/0204 Prior notification for change of use - agricultural building to dwelling at Almonds Farm, Pudding Pie Nook Lane.

Members are requested to comment on the revised submission on the following application which is detailed on the delegated planning report.

LCC/2025/0019 Proposed primary school on land situated off Henry Littler Way / Whittingham Lane.

19. CIL BUSINESS PLAN

Members are requested to NOTE the current situation on the CIL Business Plan items which have been passed to the Clerk

Trinity Church – As the ring-fenced amount has been paid, the project has been removed from the business plan.

Woodland Path – Cllr Eccles will provide a verbal update regarding the ongoing discussion with Homes England as resolved under MIN 25/26.152

Teens Play area – the project is due to be considered by Preston City Council's Cabinet on the 15th April as detailed under MIN 25/26.134

Playground equipment - Preston City Council to provide quotes to replace the equipment as detailed under MIN 25/26.134

Cumeragh drainage / play tower – drainage investigations are continuing and funds are set aside for the new surface as detailed under MIN 25/26.153

Beacon Drive – pending a proposal from Members / residents to redesign the **memorial** area MIN 25/26.38 and include the Tommy statues Nov 2025. Members also need to consider the increasing cost of the **Christmas tree** and whether other locations should be added as detailed under MIN 25/26.119 b)

Parish Walks – leaflets detailing the previously published walks have been passed to Cllr Eccles for an assessment with the Lengthsman.

20. ST JOHN'S CHURCH

Buttress have continued to work on the feasibility study and they presented an update to Cllr Price on the 24th March. Following on from their meeting, Buttress have confirmed that they have received updated inputs and are now in a position to present the full Feasibility Report.

Given the importance of the study - and the fact that Members may have several questions - it would be best if Buttress could present the Feasibility Report as a 'stand-alone' item.

With the above in mind, Members are requested to confirm a date and time for the presentation to take place.

As the Feasibility Report has been completed, Buttress have submitted an invoice for £42,582.

Members are requested to confirm payment of the invoice from CIL funds.

21. LONGRIDGE TOWN SPEEDING SUPPORT

Longridge Town Council, have discussed the speed of traffic using the road from Wheatley towards Longridge particularly between Cockleach (Tile Kiln) Corner and the Alston Arms and they consider it prudent to install speed limits between the end of Four Acre Lane and the Alston Arms.

They have asked whether Whittingham Parish Council would support their request to Lancashire County Council for a speed limit be imposed. A similar email has been sent to Thornley with Wheatley Parish Council.

Members are requested to issue a response to the request.

22. SPRING NEWSLETTER

As the May meeting marks the start of the new municipal year, this will be the ideal time for the Council to consider its communication and social media policies, whilst also adopting the marketing strategy which is likely to alter the design and format of the Newsletter.

As a Newsletter needs to be printed and delivered by the end of April to advertise the May Annual Parish Meeting, Members are requested to approve the content of the last Newsletter to be produced in the old format.

23. NOTE NEW CORRESPONDENCE

Members may be requested to note any new correspondence received.

24. PARISH LENGTHSMAN CONTRACT

Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s1, Members of the public may be requested to leave the meeting at this point as the following item relates to the terms and conditions of the Parish Lengthsman's contract.

Members are reminded that the Council requested that the Lengthsman complete a training course allowing him to carry out weekly inspections of the Cumeragh play area. MIN 25/26.70

The Lengthsman's contract was agreed for 2 years but it needs amending to reflect the addition of the weekly inspections. In addition, the Lengthsman has requested a pay rise.

The retiring Clerk, Cllr Eccles and Cllr Woodburn met the Lengthsman on the 19th March to review his work and check if the current arrangements are working for both parties.

Cllr Eccles will circulate a confidential proposal for the Council to consider.

25. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be the Annual Parish Meeting which will be held on **Thurs 14th May** at the earlier time of **6.30pm**. The Annual Parish Council meeting is usually held after the Annual Parish Meeting. Standing Orders 2025 3 (x) confirms that a meeting should not exceed 2 hours.

Members are requested to consider if they still want to hold the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Council Meeting on the same night and if so, Members are requested to determine if the Annual Parish Meeting should commence at 6.00pm

END