



**WHITTINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on**  
**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026 at 7.15pm**  
**in Goosnargh Village Hall – downstairs**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Cllr Dave Hall - Chairman  
Cllr Martin Carefoot  
Cllr Barbara Clarke  
Cllr Anthony Eccles.  
Cllr Michelle Woodburn

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

City Cllr Steve Whittam

Mrs Julie Buttle - Parish Clerk

**APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllr Lauren Chattein and Cllr Dave Price.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES of the Council meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> Jan 2026.**

**MIN 25/26.128** Members **RESOLVED** that the Chairman sign the Minutes as a true record.

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

Cllr Eccles declared a personal connection to an applicant applying for the Clerk's vacancy.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Members **noted** that PS Weronica Wallis has moved on to a new role. Her replacement is PS Suze Harvey. The rest of the Neighbourhood Policing Team remains unchanged.

As Mayor's consort, Cllr Whittam stated he was honoured to meet King Charles III during His royal visit to Preston on the 9<sup>th</sup> Feb.

He confirmed that he had been copied in to several emails regarding litterbins – specifically the removal of the litter bin outside the Post Office in Goosnargh and the removal of a bin on the Tansy Road / Cumeragh Lane junction. He will be meeting officers from the City Council to see if the bins can be reinstated.

He has also been working with officers regarding the play area / land management concerns at The Ridings off Whittingham Road. If the situation is not improved, officers have confirmed that they will consider formal enforcement proceedings.

Highways have been informed that the pavement is a mess at Pudding Pie Nook Lane and roads need resurfacing at Mill Lane and Goosnargh Lane.

Following the Reserved Matters approval at the former hospital site, the Clerk stated that there would be issues with construction lorries causing problems on the local roads. Cllr Whittam agreed to ask planning officers to add a link on their website to allow residents to report any construction enforcement issues – as was the case when NW Preston was being constructed.

Cllr Carefoot stated that the drainage / flooding issues on Halfpenny Lane have not been resolved and County Cllr Jones and the Director of Highways are not replying to emails. It was noted that County Cllr Jones's is no longer involved in combatting violence against women and girls and her role as a County Cllr was questioned. Cllr Whittam stated he would make some enquiries.

Attention was drawn to an email regarding Skew Bridge which will lead to additional traffic as motorists try to avoid the area.

- **10th March:** Temporary Traffic Signals for up to 6 weeks until Mid-April.
- **17th March:** An overnight closure from 10pm until 5:45am.
- **April 2026:** overnight closures from 10pm until 5:45am for two weeks for road surfacing
- **May 2026:** Completion of works

The Clerk advised that the SPID data is not being downloaded because the app is no longer on her new personal mobile. This can be rectified when a new Council phone is purchased as part of the alterations connected to the Clerk vacancy.

As no other matters were raised, the meeting was reconvened.

### **FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1st – 31<sup>st</sup> Jan 2026**

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

### **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT AND RECEIPTS**

**MIN 25/26.129** Members **RESOLVED** to note and approve the following invoices already paid following the January meeting.

Lengthsman – January Invoice	Mark Cornforth	£576.00	Ref 134
Autumn / Winter Newsletter printing	Preston City	£200.75	Ref 135
Dog bags invoice	JRB Enterprise	£130.26	Ref 136

**MIN 25/26.130** Members **RESOLVED** to approve the following invoices for payment

Electric Bill	E-On	£21.91	DD
Clerk Salary Feb	J Buttle	£1,627.08	BACs
PAYE	HMRC	£231.29	BACs
Employer Nat Ins	HMRC	£224.57	BACs
Nest Pension	NEST	£97.65	DD

### **TRAINING COURSE**

**MIN 25/26.131** Members **RESOLVED** to approve the £35 fee for Cllr Eccles to attend a LALC training course “Improve your knowledge of the Planning System”.

### **MARKETING STRATEGY**

Cllr Chattein presented a draft Marketing Strategy to the January meeting which sets out the Council’s ambition to make the Parish Council more visible, approachable and better understood. Members were due to consider the Strategy in more detail but the item was **deferred** because Cllr Chatten had presented her apologies.

### **CLERK VACANCY**

Due to the need to implement plans relating to the Clerk Vacancy, the Chairman proposed that agenda item 15 be brought forward.

A suggested recruitment process was emailed to Members on the 13<sup>th</sup> Jan along with a full copy of the Contract of Employment and Job description.

**MIN 25/26.132 a)** Members **RESOLVED** to approve a minor amendment to the Job Description so that the planning application section reads: - *To receive details of planning applications from relevant bodies and respond where applicable.*

Members also **NOTED** a suggestion to amend Section 7 of the Employment Contract to make it clearer *that business cover is required for home and car use and the Clerk will be required to make their own travel arrangements to attend activities outside the parish.*

Historically, the Clerk has used her personal computer and phone for Council work, however, Members have expressed a wish to provide the replacement Clerk with the equipment necessary for the role.

**MIN 25/26.132 b)** Members **RESOLVED** that the replacement Clerk should be involved in the purchase of the new equipment so that any warranties and a delivery address for ink contracts will be registered to the new Clerk’s address from the outset.

The only exception will be the purchase of a mobile phone as the current Clerk will need to delete her phone number from various accounts to ensure there are no security issues.

### **12<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026 - Minutes**

**MIN 25/26.132 c)** As network strengths vary from location to location, Members **RESOLVED** that the Clerk obtain a Council mobile phone number which may be switched to a different provider at a later date. Cllr Clarke recommended an EE package which she uses at work.

Members considered a paper detailing the suggested recruitment process.

**MIN 25/26.132 d)** Members **RESOLVED** that

- i. Councillors Carefoot, Clarke, Eccles and Woodburn would assess the applications and form the interview panel, with interviews expected to take place in the first week of March - with the Council ratifying any suggested recruitment on the 12<sup>th</sup> March.

The current Clerk's Employment Contract ends on the 8<sup>th</sup> April, which means an induction / handover process could occur between the 12<sup>th</sup> March and the 9<sup>th</sup> April, however, if there are any delays, Mrs Buttle has *offered* to extend that period.

- ii. Members **RESOLVED** to accept the Clerk's offer to stay in post beyond the 8<sup>th</sup> April if required, whilst also acknowledging that there may be a requirement to pay 2 salaries whilst the new Clerk is trained. Members also **noted** that the current Clerk's employment will not be extended beyond the 14<sup>th</sup> May Annual Parish Meeting.

Members noted as that the 2025/26 Financial Year end concludes after the current Clerk's Employment Contract officially ends, Mrs Buttle has *offered* to complete the 2025/26 audit.

- iii. Members **RESOLVED** that Mrs Buttle completes the 2025/26 audit for an invoiced fee equivalent to her current rate of pay – to include presenting the 2025/26 year-end financial information to the 14<sup>th</sup> May Annual Parish Meeting.

For clarity, the replacement Clerk will be required to commence the 2026/27 accounts, in whatever format the Council requires, from April onwards.

## **CIL FINANCE PLAN**

Members **noted** that there have been no CIL income or expenditure transactions, so the CIL Finance Plan remains as presented to the January meeting with a balance of £624,685.

## **NEW CIL FINANCE REQUEST**

Longridge Town Council submitted an email request for a CIL donation of £140 towards lamp post banners and festive lights. The email states that *Longridge Members felt that as neighbouring villages benefit from the investment, they may wish to make a contribution.*

Members acknowledged that Longridge is a key service centre serving the residents of Halfpenny Lane, Whittingham Road and further afield, however, as the email states that Longridge Town Council has sufficient funds for the project, it was felt that Whittingham's CIL should prioritise local community projects which may not go ahead if funding isn't available.

Notwithstanding the above, Members have previously requested that Longridge Town Council resume the cross-boundary meetings with local parishes - including Thornley, Hothersall, Grimsargh and Ribchester so that issues such as planning, highways and tourism can be discussed collectively.

**MIN 25/26.133** Members **RESOLVED** that the Clerk inform Longridge Town Council of the above comments and request that the cross-boundary meetings are reintroduced so that any future projects may be considered more favourably in the future.

## **CIL BUSINESS PLAN – Updates**

### **Gym Equipment & Play Ground Equipment.**

Further to MINs 122 & 123 of the Jan meeting, the Clerk and Cllr Eccles met Preston City Council officers regarding the Goosnargh Village Teens Play Area and the refurbishment of the Playground.

**Teens Play Area** – The Clerk informed the City Council that Members were concerned that Tenders for the drainage and installation were significantly higher than the City Council had originally estimated. Officers explained that this was due to the current economic climate and the soaring cost of materials, however, as the Tender included the supply of equipment, the cost should not increase further once the Tender is accepted.

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council has **RESOLVED** to ringfence an amount to proceed with the Tender provided by Contractor 1. MIN 25/26.122 (b)

Based on this, the City Council confirmed that the timeline would proceed as follows

- 19<sup>th</sup> March – deadline for the 15<sup>th</sup> April Cabinet report
- 22<sup>nd</sup> April – deadline for the Cabinet decision to be ‘called in’
- Legal papers to be drawn up by the Council’s Solicitor
- **29<sup>th</sup> April** – estimated start date for the contractor + 4 weeks to complete
- Project complete by the **end of May** (subject to grass growing maintenance)
- The equipment remains a City Council asset in terms of inspection and maintenance

**Playground equipment** – Officers stated that they had drafted a Strategy which indicated that play areas needed to be enhanced in Whittingham, however the City Council determined that the Strategy needed to go out to consultation. As this process has not been completed, there is uncertainty regarding *when* the City Council can replace the equipment.

Cllr Eccles stated that the play area is well used and the removal of the equipment has had a significant impact on youngsters in the village. The City Council replied that the uncertainty can be removed if the Parish Council agrees to fund the equipment.

As the equipment is likely to be in the region of £150,000, the City Council will need to obtain 3 quotes before a Contract can be awarded. The Clerk requested that the 3 quotes are obtained so that the Parish Council can decide whether it is in a position to fund the equipment.

**MIN 25/26.134** As the Parish Council will be considering the St John’s Church Feasibility Study in March / April Members **RESOLVED** that the decision to fund the new play equipment should be considered in April / May - by which time the City Council should have obtained the 3 quotes.

### **Beacon Drive Memorial Garden & Christmas Tree**

Members indicated that they wish to enhance and redesign the area around the Memorial at Beacon Drive to include the permanent positioning of the Tommy Statues. In addition, land to the left of the Memorial is used for the Parish Christmas Tree, the cost of which increased significantly in 2025.

Under MIN 25/26.86 Members resolved to source quotes for new Christmas tree suppliers for 2026/27 and - following a grant request for a Christmas tree at Cumeragh - it was suggested that the Christmas tree provision should also be reviewed.

**MIN 25/26.135** As both projects may be enhanced by the new marketing strategy, Members **RESOLVED** that they will be progressed by the replacement Clerk in April / May.

### **Scout Hut**

The Scouts have advised that Preston City Council have issued some positive pre-application advice in respect of the site for the proposed scout hut. Discussions are ongoing with the land owners and the Scouts are hoping to have a meeting with them in March.

### **CIL BUSINESS PLAN – Items requiring decisions**

#### **a) Woodland walk**

The January Minutes confirm that the Clerk has been trying to arrange a meeting with LCC to discuss how the Woodland Walk can be used to improve pedestrian access to the new school in the hope that a joint approach will persuade Homes England to reassess the land valuation.

It was established that LCC are using a firm of consultants (MAKE NW) to develop the access plans and the Clerk and Cllr Eccles met their representative on the 30<sup>th</sup> Jan.

Following the meeting, MAKE NW drew up a Business Case to present to Homes England requesting that the land is released at a peppercorn cost, to which Homes England replied that in accordance with S10 Housing & Regeneration Act, they need to secure the best consideration obtainable.

A draft response expressing disappointment to Home's England's reply was circulated with the agenda.

**MIN 25/26.136** Members **RESOLVED** that the Clerk issue the draft response with a request to meet on Teams to confirm if the valuation is negotiable.

#### **b) Cumeragh Drainage / play tower.**

Cllr Eccles has been trying to resolve the flooding under the climbing tower so that a rubberised surface can be added. His latest report confirms that LCC cleared the drain for a distance of 10m at no cost and water is now flowing freely. However, a camera inspection is recommended as there is still a concern of localised damage / collapse of the drain pipework.

Cllr Eccles proposed that the Council identifies and fixes the problem properly before money is invested in the new surface.

**MIN 25/26.137** Members **RESOLVED** to approve a quote from A & D Drains at a cost of £400 plus VAT. As the investigations are linked to the provision of new infrastructure, Members confirmed that the inspection may be funded through CIL

#### **c) GATSO camera**

For some time, the Council has been trying to get clear guidance on whether a GATSO enforcement camera (yellow box) can be installed in the Parish. LCC have provided guidance stating that the route must include 3 killed or seriously injured collisions in a 36-month period.

**MIN 25/26.138** As neither Whittingham Lane or Whittingham Road meet the criteria, Members **RESOLVED** that the Clerk write back to LCC to ask if anything substantial can be done to deter motorists from speeding.

#### **d) Beacon Drive Vegetation**

MIN 25/26.95 of the Oct meeting confirms that Members resolved to allocate £500 towards the removal of the vegetation at the side of the Memorial as it falls outside the scope of the Parish Lengthsman. Due to the size of the trees, quotes have been received which exceed £500.

Cllr Eccles, who has been working on the project with the Parish Lengthsman, advised that Greenbanks had quoted £540 + VAT with an optional cost of £250 + VAT to replace the trees.

**MIN 25/26.139** Members **RESOLVED** to accept his proposal to use Greenbanks to remove the trees and plant replacements.

### **ST JOHN'S CHURCH COMMUNITY PROJECT**

Further to the parking concerns expressed at the 8<sup>th</sup> Jan meeting, Cllr Price spoke to Buttress who confirmed that the emerging options in the Feasibility Study will include indicative parking requirements. On the 14<sup>th</sup> Jan, Cllr Price and the Clerk attended a Teams meeting with Focus who will start to appraise the financial implications of the suggested options.

A further Teams meeting was held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb where it was expected that Buttress would provide a feasibility assessment of the 3 workbook proposed options, however, 3 more concepts were put forward with no financial costings.

To ensure the Feasibility Study remains on track, on the 9<sup>th</sup> Feb, Cllr Price issued an email reiterating the Council's expectations from the Feasibility Study. Buttress replied to provide reassurance that the shared objective remains to identify a viable and deliverable long-term use for St. John's.

Members **noted** that the next step is for Buttress to provide itemised costings for the options which will include residential, 'shell and core' for a scheme to be leased to an external contractor and the emerging community centred scheme.

## **PLANNING APPLICATIONS - CONSIDERED UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY**

Members **noted** the delegated representation of no objections to **06/2025/1305** two single storey extensions to rear, new garage & alterations to access at Fell View, Goosnargh Lane.

The Clerk reminded Members of an application for industrial units and a replacement dwelling at Sand Bank Estate off Cumeragh Lane. The Parish Council objected to the industrial estate as it would extend further into the countryside however the application was approved. A Reserved Matters application has now been submitted for the dwelling house. The Clerk will add the application to the March meeting.

Thanks were expressed to those who attended the Swainson House Farm appeal. Cllr Woodburn stated that the Inspector listened to the representatives and answered all the questions asked. The Clerk stated that the decision notice will be added to the Planning appeals portal and the City Council planning page.

There have been no further updates relating to the Local Plan Hearing.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION - CONSULTATION**

Members will be aware that the Government is considering several options to merge Councils together to form new Unitary Councils. The Government is running a statutory consultation on all five proposals to gather views from residents and stakeholders. Further details are available on this link <https://lancashirelgr.co.uk/> The consultation will run until the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

**MIN 25/26.140** Members recognised that the District Councils have submitted detailed bids explaining their merger preferences and **RESOLVED** not to submit any comments.

## **NOTE NEW CORRESPONDENCE**

Members **noted** that Langley Lane will be closed from its junction with Barton Lane to outside of 1 Ivy Cottages on the 13/03/26 to enable overhead structure works to take place.

The Best Kept Village Committee have issued a letter detailing several reasons why the event will not go ahead in 2026. Cllr Woodburn stated that the volunteers of Goosnargh and Whittingham in Bloom will continue their efforts to enhance and beautify the parish.

Cllr Woodburn and the Clerk informed Members of a resident's email stating that the proposed diversion route of a Public Right of Way around Carroway Green is incorrect. The matter has been referred to LCC.

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled on **12th March 2026** at 7.15pm in Goosnargh Village Hall.

**END**