



WHITTINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

on Thursday 8th Jan 2026 at 7.15pm

in Goosnargh Village Hall – downstairs

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No Members of the public were present.

Mrs Julie Buttle - Parish Clerk

APOLOGIES

Apologies were **noted** from County Cllr Maria Jones and City Cllr Steve Whittam.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 13^H NOV 2025.

MIN 25/26.114 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

The Localism Act provides that a Councillor may not participate in any discussion or vote on a matter where they have a disclosable, pecuniary interest (DPI). As setting the Precept may result in a DPI, Members **living in the Parish** are advised to complete a dispensation form before setting the Precept. The Clerk confirmed all Members present are covered by previously approved dispensations.

There were no other declarations of interest.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

MIN 25/26.115 Although no public were present, to give Members the same speaking rights as members of the public, Members **RESOLVED** to adjourn the meeting for public participation.

When presenting his apologies, Cllr Whittam requested that the Clerk inform Members that as Preston City Council can't put new bins on areas belonging to land developers, they have upgraded some bins to larger-capacity units. The new 240 litre bins are on Cumeragh Lane and near the Post Office / Stags Head.

Members stated that whilst one bin has increased in size, the bin nearest the Post Office has been removed. This bin is used more frequently as people leave with packaging and wrappers etc. The Clerk was requested to forward the feedback to Cllr Whittam.

Cllr Eccles informed Members that the Goosnargh and Whittingham Heritage Group were hosting a talk '*Longridge through the eyes of my Great Grandparents*' in the Community Room of St Mary the Virgin on Mon 19th Jan at 7.30pm. Tickets are £3.

Cllr Chattein asked if Members were aware of an accident involving a jogger on Langley Lane between Christmas and the New Year. Cllr Woodburn also mentioned an accident on Whittingham Lane opposite the junction with Pudding Pie Nook Lane.

The Clerk will refer both queries to the police.

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

APPROVAL OF PAID INVOICES

MIN 25/26.116 Members **RESOLVED** to note and approve the following invoices paid during December.

DETAILS	PAYEE	AMOUNT	METHOD	REF
Parish Lengthsman Nov	M Cornforth	£432.00	BACs	116
New Councillor training course	LALC	£35.00	BACs	117
1500 Flyers St John event	Preston City Council	£83.75	BACs	118
Christmas donation	Cumeragh Village	£150.00	BACs	119
Delivery Newsletter	J P P Media	£244.80	BACs	120
Parish Lengthsman Dec	M Cornforth	£432.00	BACs	121
Clerk Salary Dec	J Buttle	£1627.08	BACs	122
HMRC PAYE	HMRC	£231.29	BACs	123
Employer Nat Ins	HMRC	£224.57	BACs	124
Pension	NEST	£97.65	DD	125
E-On bill	E-On	£17.64	DD	126

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1st – 31st Dec 2025

The Chairman confirmed that the finance and bank statements had been reconciled.

Members **NOTED** that the subscription to Microsoft 365 Business Basic decreased from £4.90 a month to £4.83 a month from the 12th Dec 2025 and the cost of the Unity Bank account will increase from £6 to £7 a month from 1st February 2026.

REVIEW OF 3rd QUARTER ACCOUNTS 2025 / 2026

Following the completion of the 3rd quarter April – December 2025, Members noted that the underspend on the audit could be used to cover the increased cost of the Insurance and the surplus in the maintenance budget could be used to cover the cost of the 2025/26 Christmas tree and the Cumeragh play area call out fees / removal of the balancing logs.

MIN 25/26.117 Members **RESOLVED** to approve the 3rd quarter analysis with above virements.

JANUARY ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

MIN 25/26.118 Members **RESOLVED** to approve the following accounts for payment

DETAILS	PAYEE	AMOUNT	METHOD
¾ expenses Oct - Dec	J Buttle	£44.21	BACs
Christmas tree package	Nurture	£1,500.00	BACs
Jan Salary	J Buttle	£1627.08	BACs
PAYE	HMRC	£231.29	BACs
Employer Nat Ins	HMRC	£224.57	BACs
Pension	NEST	£97.65	BACs
Electric- including xmas lights	EON	£42.19	DD

CONSIDERATION OF 2026/27 PRECEPT

At the November meeting, the Clerk presented a DRAFT budget for £51,522 which included a suggested figure of £5,000 for marketing. The budget was approved - subject to the development of a marketing strategy explaining how the £5,000 will be used.

Cllr Chattein verbally presented a draft of the Marketing Strategy. The full document will need to be considered and approved at a future meeting, however, in relation to the budget, Members **noted** that the strategy had identified costs of £3,000 to cover a 'meet the Council' event, a welcome pack for new residents, an additional notice board, and the development of WhitWhat.

Additional costs were also identified relating to branding, an increased digital presence and a revamped newsletter using software available to Cllr Chattein.

MIN 25/26.119 a) Based on the breakdown of costs, Members **RESOLVED** to include £5,000 in the budget for the marketing strategy, as suggested in November.

Retirement - The Clerk informed Members, that due to a mixture of professional and personal reasons occurring since the November meeting, she has informed the Chairman of her intention to retire. Under the terms of her Contract of Employment, she is required to serve 3 months' notice, meaning her employment could terminate at the end of the March.

The recruitment process will be confirmed at the February meeting, however the Clerk has raised the matter under 'Consideration of the 2026/27 Precept' because, to ensure a smooth handover, the Clerk has indicated that she is willing to assist in the training / induction of the new Clerk - which may result in the payment of 2 salaries for a short period of time.

In addition, apart from a combined scanner / photocopier, the Clerk has provided her own phone and IT equipment and new equipment may need to be provided depending on the replacement Clerk's circumstances.

MIN 25/26.119 b) Although the Council has not had an opportunity to consider the above information, from a financial point of view, Members **NOTED** that the suggested Precept allows for any unbudgeted salary and IT costs to be funded from the Council's Reserves.

The Clerk ran through the suggested Precept spreadsheet, explaining that the estimated income from CIL interest, has been reduced to fund the one-off expense of inspecting the trees at Cumeragh and to reflect the Council's decision to fund the Lengthsman's contract and materials from CIL interest rather than the budget. (MIN 24/25.100)

The Clerk also explained that 2025/26 budget included £510 for a Christmas Tree at Beacon Drive however, when the contract altered to Nurture, the cost increased to £1,250 resulting in the additional cost being vired from the balance in the maintenance costs.

Consequently, Members were requested to **note** that a Christmas tree has not been included in the 2026/27 budget because Members have already requested to reconsider the options available - including whether Christmas trees should be provided to other areas of the parish – and permanent trees with solar lights may be funded from CIL.

Councillor Price stated that he had a problem understanding the figures and the presentation of the accounts, particularly with CIL interest being used to fund some of the Council's costs.

The Clerk acknowledged that the spreadsheets are outdated and reminded Members that she had trialled a Parish Council software package called SCRIBE. Whilst trialling the software, it was announced that the Smaller Authorities and Proper Practices Panel are looking at introducing new procedures to ensure that all Parish Councils present financial information in a clear and consistent way. As those procedures have not yet been decided, the Clerk has presented the information in exactly the same format as in previous years.

Further debate followed and the Chairman drew the matter to a close, noting that the City Council needs to be advised of the Precept requirement by the 23rd Jan.

Councillor Price requested that his objection to the figures and presentation of the information be recorded. He requested a meeting with the Clerk to discuss presenting the information in a different format which Cllr Eccles also requested to see.

MIN 25/26.119 c) After noting Cllr Price's objection, Members **RESOLVED** to approve the Precept at £31,500.

LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET CONSULTATION

MIN 25/26.120 Members **NOTED** LCC's consultation on the budget and **RESOLVED** to reply to LCCs survey on Public Rights of Way by requesting that they reinstate the PROW grant to Parishes and make more grants available to assist landowners and Councils wishing to improve access to local walks.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

FINANCE – Members **NOTED** the CIL Finance Statement to Dec 2025 confirming the CIL balance as £624,685.

Trinity Methodist Church - Members **NOTED** that work will shortly start on the extension. The Clerk has agreed that the Church forward invoice copies to the Parish Council. CIL will be released in accordance with the invoices received until the £65,000 ringfenced amount is reached. For clarity, the Church will be responsible for paying the contractor's invoices with released CIL monies.

BUSINESS PLAN – Members **NOTED** the CIL Business Plan which reflects the current position on all CIL items.

UPDATES

Woodland Walk – pending a meeting with LCC to discuss how the Woodland Walk can be used to improve pedestrian access to the school as this may be a bargaining tool to reduce the proposed purchase price.

Drainage of Cumeragh play area – pending a site meeting with LCC and Cllr Eccles.

Beacon Drive Memorial – Members have previously suggested redesigning the area to include a permanent site for the Tommy Statues and a ‘living’ Christmas tree. The matter is currently pending design ideas from Members.

Under MIN 25/26.95 of the October meeting, Members resolved to allocate £500 towards the removal of vegetation. Shrubs to the left of the Memorial have been cut back but trees to the rear boundary require the services of an arboriculturist with specialist equipment. Cllr Eccles, the Lengthsman and the Clerk are seeking quotes to progress this.

Former Hospital site development

Barratts have stated they are happy to meet with Members to follow up on the Council’s planning comments and concerns regarding the management of the open space and historical links, however timing is an issue as they are busy preparing Condition Discharge applications. The Clerk has emailed them again for some meeting dates.

DECISIONS

SPID pole – Despite several reminders being issued, LCC have not invoiced the Council to erect a new SPID pole to replace the one damaged by a car in 2024.

MIN 25/26.121 Members **RESOLVED** to move the item to Cat 4 of the CIL Business Plan.

GYM equipment – Under MIN 24/25.125, Members resolved to set aside £40,000 for Proludic to install Ninja gym equipment on Goosnargh village green, however, Preston City Council who own the land, stated that drainage and access to the equipment needs to be improved, so Members resolved to increase the amount to £50,000 - MIN 25/26.56.

The City Council have since completed a procurement exercise to install the equipment and have advised that the Tenders are in excess of £50,000. They have requested that the exact figures are kept confidential at this stage.

Members stated that they want the project delivered as soon as possible and concern was expressed that if the Tenders are not accepted, the whole process will have to start again.

MIN 25/26.122 Members **RESOLVED** to **a)** arrange a meeting with the City Council to view the Tenders to understand exactly what the costs are and **b)** increase the ringfenced CIL amount to £83,050 to ensure it includes a contingency sufficient to cover any additional costs.

PLAY equipment – In Feb 2025, the City Council advised that the multi-use play equipment in the Goosnargh play area needed replacing and they had £14,000 of S106 monies to replace it. Members resolved to match fund the amount under MIN 24/25.140 - giving a total budget of £28,000.

In Oct 2025, the City Council circulated plans for some replacement equipment totalling £150,000. Their covering email stated that *additional funding would come from another pot of money*. Consequently, Members resolved to reply that the scale and quality of the proposed equipment was appropriate to the play area. MIN 25/26.94.

The City Council have previously stated that the equipment is due to be installed by the end of March 2026 but as noted in the Nov 2025 Minutes, they have also advised that *alternative companies need to be approached due to the cost*.

At this point, the Parish Council has not been requested to increase its contribution and due to the uncertainty of the project, the item will remain in Category 2 of the Business Plan.

MIN 25/26.123, Members **RESOLVED** that the Clerk arrange a meeting with the City Council to clarify exactly what the equipment will be replaced with and when will it be installed.

ST JOHN'S CHURCH

The public consultation event took place on the 7th Nov and generated a lot of interest. Buttress have since produced an Interim Design Workbook with 3 options for consideration which Members viewed on the 16th Dec. Concern was expressed that all of the options will require car parking facilities but this doesn't appear to have been a consideration.

Cllr Price voiced his concern that Buttress seem to be limiting the scope of the Feasibility Study to 'concept design', pushing back an assessment on the viability of parking to a later post feasibility study stage. He had drafted a paper outlining his concerns which the Clerk circulated.

MIN 25/26.124 Members agreed that parking considerations must be factored into the Feasibility Study and **RESOLVED** that Cllr Price submit his circulated response to Buttress.

As previously advised, Buttresses Invitation to Quote included a signed agreement to deliver the Feasibility Study in accordance with their submission, however an additional contract was drawn up with appended Minutes clarifying liability details and other admin processes not known at the submission stage. The additional document was not signed because Buttress wanted some of the clauses to be amended. This has now been resolved but due to the delay in reaching an agreement, work is continuing based on the document they signed as part of their submission.

Notwithstanding the above, the Clerk stated that an Invoice has been received which bears no resemblance to the fixed fees submitted in their Feasibility Bid.

Members confirmed that their understanding was that payment would be made - in accordance with the submitted Fixed Fee schedule - once the Feasibility Study has been satisfactorily delivered.

MIN 25/26.125 Members **RESOLVED** that the Clerk advise Buttress of the above and request that the invoice be cancelled.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS & UPDATES

Member **NOTED** that no routine applications have been considered under delegated authority since the November meeting.

06/2025/1250 Two storey extension and alterations to create 2no new seclusion suites and a new plant room at Elmridge House, Guild Park, Cumeragh Lane.

Members considered the above application seeking to extend the previously approved health facility. Whist the extension will be built on the existing secure garden area, new secure garden areas will be created to the south and north east of the extension.

MIN 25/26.126 Members **RESOLVED** that they had no objections to the application.

Swainson House Farm Appeal – The November agenda summarised the reasons for the Swainson House Farm appeal and comments were submitted a) by the Clerk on behalf of the Parish Council and b) by Cllr Price, who has been acting in a personal capacity.

The Appeal Hearing will take place on the 4th Feb. Anyone who made a representation on the application may attend the hearing and at the Inspector's discretion, may speak at the hearing.

The Clerk advised that as the Parish Council's objections are now in line with the City Council's decision to refuse the application, the City Council are best placed to defend the decision from a housing supply and planning policy perspective.

MIN 25/26.127 Members **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council would not speak at the appeal, however it was acknowledged that Councillor Price would attend and speak in a personal capacity.

Local Plan - Hearings on the soundness of the Local Plan commenced in December. Unfortunately, the Clerk was unable to attend the debate regarding the proposed housing sites at Gorlands on Whittingham Road, however the Parish Council's written responses will be taken into account.

Members **NOTED** that the Hearing will continue until the end of January.

NOTE NEW CORRESPONDENCE

Members were requested to **NOTE** the following updates on ongoing items

a) Grounds Maintenance concern at Prospect Homes Former Ridings site

The Clerk has requested Cllr Steve Whittam follow the matter up as the City Council has not replied to any emails requesting an update.

b) Drain pump and charges for grounds maintenance at Inglewood – the Clerk has been

advised that Maya Ellis MP & County Cllr Jones are investigating the maintenance concerns and the demands for payments.

c) School Academy – Cllr Chattein advised that the selection process to determine who will run the new Academy primary school has been pushed back until February

d) Brabiner Lane – Members were reminded that Brabiner Lane will be temporarily closed on the 15th / 16th Jan to enable pole installation works to take place.

Cllr Hall stated that he had seen a Notice stating that Halfpenny Lane would also be closed on the 19th - 23rd Jan. The Clerk will check why the Parish Council has not been notified.

The Clerk informed Members that an email has been received from Longridge Town Council asking if the Council would be willing to make a financial contribution towards banner mounts and sockets on lighting columns in the town centre. As the email arrived on the day of the meeting, the Clerk will request more details before adding the request to the February Agenda.

The Clerk was also requested to ask if Longridge Town Council would be issuing Minutes or reconvening the cross-boundary partnership meetings as suggested at the Local Government Reorganisation meeting which they organised on the 3rd November.

DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday 12th February 2026 at 7.15pm in Goosnargh Village Hall.