



## Astley Village Parish Council

### Annual Meeting of the Council

5 May 2021 at 7.00pm

Present

Councillor Laura Lennox (Chair) (in the Chair); Councillors Arnold Almond, Keith Ashton, Rod Fraser, Chris Lennox, Matt Lynch, John McAndrew, Gillian Sharples and Chris Sheldon.

#### **298.01 Election of the Chair of the Parish Council**

RESOLVED – That Councillor Arnold Almond be elected Chair of the Parish Council until the next Annual Council Meeting.

Councillor Almond signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took the Chair.

Councillor Almond in the Chair

#### **298.02 Appointment of Vice Chair of the Parish Council**

RESOLVED – That Councillor Rod Fraser be elected Vice Chair of the Parish Council until the next Annual Council Meeting.

#### **298.03 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

#### **298.04 Declarations of Interest**

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interests they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

Councillor Matt Lynch declared an interest in item 19 “Correspondence – Complaint”, left the meeting and took no part in the item.

#### **298.05 Exclusion of the Public**

RESOLVED - That the Press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of item 19 “Correspondence” (Minute 298.19) due to the confidential nature to be discussed pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

#### **298.06 Minutes**

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 3 March 2021 (copies of which had been circulated) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **298.07 Appointment of Committees, Membership, Terms of Reference**

The Parish Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) inviting the Parish Council to consider the Appointment of Committees, Membership, Terms of Reference.

RESOLVED - (1) That the following members be appointed to the Personnel Committee:

Councillor Chris Sheldon (Chair).  
Councillor Rod Fraser (Ex-officio).  
Councillor John McAndrew.  
Councillor Gillian Sharples.

(2) That the following Working Parties be established and the following Councillors be appointed to them:

### **General Purposes Working Group**

Councillor Arnold Almond.  
Councillor Keith Ashton.  
Councillor John McAndrew.

### **Village Development Working Group**

Councillor Keith Ashton.  
Councillor Gillian Sharples.  
Councillor Chris Sheldon.

## **298.08 Review of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation**

The Parish Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) inviting the Parish Council to consider/review:

- The Parish Council's Standing Orders.
- The revised Financial Regulations to address the need to obtain three quotations or estimates for orders for works, goods, and services.
- The draft Scheme of Delegation which enables the Parish Clerk and Committees of the Parish Council to act to avoid any undue delays in decisions being taken.

RESOLVED - (1) That the Parish Council's Standing Orders as set out in Appendix A to the report be confirmed subject to the language being gender neutral and the following Standing Orders be amended as follows:

### "39. Resolutions on Expenditure

The Scheme of Delegation sets out the delegation arrangements in relation to expenditure. Any resolution which, if carried, would, in the opinion of the Chair, substantially increase the expenditure upon any service which is under the management of the Council or reduce the revenue at the disposal of any committee, or which would involve capital expenditure, shall, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council."

### "77 Financial Matters

2) Any proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works with an estimated value in excess of £10,000 shall be procured on the basis of a formal tender as summarised in (3) below."

(2) To Financial Regulations as set out in Appendix B to the report be approved and adopted including:

- Financial Regulation 11.1.8 - In the case of contracts at an estimated cost of less than £2,000 it shall be in the discretion of the Parish Council whether to obtain competitive quotations in any particular case.
- Financial Regulation 11.1.9 - For contracts at an estimated cost of £2,000 or more, but less than £10,000 three competitive quotations shall usually be obtained, and in the case of contracts costing £10,000 or more, public notice inviting tenders shall be given in one or more newspapers circulating in the district. The Committee may also resolve to invite tenders by newspaper advertisement in other cases, if thought desirable.
- Financial Regulation 13.2 - No property shall be sold, leased, or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Parish Council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £500, in which case the RFO may make the decision to dispose.

(3) That the proposed Scheme of Delegation as set out in Appendix C to the report be approved subject to the deletion of paragraphs 4.4 and 4.5 and the substitution of the following:

#### **“General Purposes Working Group**

The General Purposes Working Group will progress schemes determined by the Parish Council which have not been delegated to another Committee/Working Party. Membership will be determined at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and additional member(s), including lay member(s), with relevant professional experience may be invited to meetings of the Working Group where appropriate. The Chair and will be elected by the members of the Working Group at its first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council. The frequency of meetings will be determined by the Chair subject to the number of meetings not exceeding six in any twelve-month period and meetings will normally be held virtually. The Parish Clerk will be invited to all meetings.

#### **Village Development Working Group**

The Village Development Working Group will progress schemes within the Parish Development Plan which have not been delegated to another Committee/Working Party. Membership will be determined at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and additional member(s), including lay member(s), with relevant professional experience may be invited to meetings of the Working Group where appropriate. The Chair and will be elected by the members of the Working Group at its first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council. The frequency of meetings will be determined by the Chair subject to the number of meetings not exceeding six in any twelve-month period and meetings will normally be held virtually. The Parish Clerk will be invited to all meetings.”

### **298.09 Appointment of Council Representatives on Outside Bodies**

RESOLVED – That the following Councillors be appointed to represent the Parish Council on the following Outside Bodies:

- Chorley Liaison – Councillor Arnold Almond.
- Neighbourhood Working Group – Councillor Rod Fraser.
- Friends of Astley Park – Councillor John McAndrew.

## **298.10 Parish Clerk Report**

The Clerk reported that:

- a Business Debit Card had now been received and a Bank Mandate had been submitted for Councillor Keith Ashton to replace Councillor Laura Lennox as a signatory on the Barclays bank accounts.
- The High Court had ruled against Lawyers in Local Government (LLG), Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) and Hertfordshire County Council in their bid to enable local councils to continue meet remotely. Remote meetings would therefore be unlawful from 7 May 2021. Although the Community Centre had been booked for meetings for the remainder of the Municipal Year, this was dependent on the current social distancing restrictions being relaxed.
- The Parish Council had renewed its registration with the Information Commissioners Office.
- The Parish Council was required to complete the 're-declaration' by The Pension Regulator.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Parish Clerk be requested to investigate purchasing lamp post poppies for Chancery Road and report back to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

## **298.11 Statutory Business**

### Planning Issues Relevant to the Village

The Parish Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing details of planning issues relevant to the village. The Parish Council had been consulted on the following planning application received by Chorley Borough Council:

- a Single storey side extension 16 Harperley, Astley Village, Chorley PR7 1XB (Reference: 21/00264/FULHH). The deadline for any representations was 15 April 2021.
- a terrace which is 600 mm above the ground level, 2 No wheelchair ramps and associated handrails (retrospective) at 5 Merefield, Astley Village, Chorley PR7 1UP (Reference:21/00377/FULHH). The deadline for any representations was 11 May 2021.
- a Single storey side/rear extension at 10 Judeland, Astley Village, Chorley PR7 1XJ (Reference: 21/00428/FULHH). The deadline for any representations was 20 May 2021.

RESOLVED – (1) - That the planning applications be noted.

(2) That the Parish Council express its disappointment that the application at 5 Merefield was retrospective.

## **298.12 Financial Matters**

### (i) Financial Position

The Responsible Financial Officer submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) showing the financial position as at 26 April 2021.

RESOLVED – That the financial position be noted.

(ii) Payments to be Approved

The Responsible Financial Officer submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) recommending a list of invoices as follows:

Date	Creditor	Description	Cheque No	Total	Vat	Net
23/04/21	Microsoft	Microsoft 365 Personal	EB	59.99	10.00	49.99
23/04/21	Zoom	Zoom Subscription (April 2021)	EB	14.39	2.40	11.99
15/05/21	Employee 4	Reimbursements (March 2021)	EB	66.52		66.52
15/05/21	Employee 4	Reimbursements (April 2021)	EB	33.10		33.10
23/05/21	Zoom	Zoom Subscription (May 2021)	EB	14.39	2.40	11.99
01/05/21	Easy Web Sites	Monthly rental	DD	49.20	8.20	41.00
15/05/21	Employee 2	Salary (May 2021)	EB	77.22		77.22
15/05/21	Employee 4	Salary (May 2021)	EB	304.50		304.50
15/05/21	HMRC	Tax (May 2021)	EB	76.20		76.20
01/06/21	Easy Web Sites	Monthly rental	DD	49.20	8.20	41.00
23/06/21	Zoom	Zoom Subscription (June 2021)	EB	14.39	2.40	11.99
15/06/21	Employee 2	Salary (June 2021)	EB	77.22		77.22
15/06/21	Employee 4	Salary (June 2021)	EB	304.50		304.50
15/06/21	HMRC	Tax (June 2021)	EB	76.20		76.20
				<b>1,217.02</b>	<b>33.60</b>	<b>1,183.42</b>

RESOLVED – That approval be given to the payments as detailed above.

(iii) Spend Against Budget Headings

The Responsible Financial Officer submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) inviting the Parish Council to review the spend against budget headings.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and the description of budget 03-1 “New Lighting Scheme for the Christmas Tree” being amended to “Christmas”.

(iv) Update from the Head Teacher regarding the grant of £500 made to Buckshaw Primary School.

The Head Teacher provided an update regarding the grant of £500 made to Buckshaw Primary School. The School had purchased fleeces (£487) and the remaining funds had contributed towards a PE kit for a family who were in need.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

(v) Internal Auditors Report and Statement of Accounts for 2020/21

RESOLVED – That the report and assurances provided by the Internal Auditor be noted.

(vi) Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

RESOLVED – As the members of Astley Village Parish Council we acknowledge our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021, that:

	Agreed			‘Yes’ means that this authority:
	Yes	No		
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓			<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓			<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓			<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors’ rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓			<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority’s accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓			<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓			<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓			<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓			<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A	<i>has met all of its responsibilities where as a body corporate it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>
			✓	

(vii) Annual Return for the Financial Year 2020/21

It was noted that the Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer had certified that for the year ended 31 March 2021 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return had been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners’ Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

RESOLVED – (1) That the following Accounting Statements 2020/21 for Astley Village Parish Council be approved as follows:

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2020 £	31 March 2021 £	
			<i>Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.</i>
1. Balances brought forward	53,427	59,912	<i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i>
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	20,689	20,794	<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
3. (+) Total other receipts	5,719	5,817	<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
4. (-) Staff costs	5,251	6,277	<i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i>
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority’s borrowings (if any).</i>
6. (-) All other payments	14,627	6,777	<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
7. (=) Balances carried forward	59,912	73,469	<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	59,912	73,469	<i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – <b>To agree with bank reconciliation.</b></i>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	31,377	24,878	<i>The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i>
10. Total borrowings	0	0	<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure of Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	<i>The Council as a body corporate acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i>
		✓	<i>N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.</i>

(2) That the Asset Register be reviewed at the next Parish Council Meeting on 7 July 2021.

### **298.13 Report of the Village Development Working Group**

The Chair of the Working Group (Councillor Chris Sheldon) reported that Chorley Borough would be planting strips of wildflowers running from Long Copse to Long Croft Meadow as well as an area at the junction of The Farthings and Chancery Road during May 2021.

The Parish Council would be continuing to maintain and upgrade ten planters along Chancery Road and the Parish Council discussed the arrangements for the future maintenance of the planters.

It was reported that the works at West Way Sports Hub were progressing in accordance with the programme. Completion and opening of the changing pavilion, artificial grass pitch and compact athletics track was expected week commencing 12 July 2021. A date for the evaluation panel to progress the tender package for the play area was still to be confirmed.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That Councillor Sheldon be requested to investigate engaging a private contractor to undertake the planting twice a year and the budget for the Planter Scheme be increased to £500.

### **298.14 Report of the Working Group to consider Signage in the Village**

A report (copies of which had been circulated) was submitted, updating the Parish Council in relation to the work undertaken by the Working Group.

RESOLVED – (1) That the update on Gateway Signs be noted, and the proposals outlined in the report be endorsed.

(2) That approval be given to the preparation and re-painting of the two Gateway Signs in green/white and to repaint the Millennium Notice board in green at a total cost of £360.00 (excluding VAT) by Autocross Euroshel Ltd.

(3) That in relation to the renovation of the Chancery Road Bus Shelters, the following be agreed that:

(a) Approval be given to the repainting of five Shelters along Chancery Road at a total cost of £2,125.00 (£425 per shelter) excluding VAT.

(b) Autocross Euroshel Ltd be requested to commence work as soon as possible after Monday 10 May 2021.

(c) To work with Chorley Borough Council to improve the appearance of the Village.

(d) Permanent notices are posted in each of the bus shelters advising that these renovations had been achieved jointly by the Parish Council.

(4) That the Working Group and the Parish Clerk be authorised to proceed with the above schemes and any associated decisions required subject, to the overall contingency budgets being adhered to.



### **298.15 Newsletter**

The Parish Council discussed the Summer edition of the Parish Council Newsletter.

It was noted that it was hoped the newsletter would be printed by 18 June 2021 and distributed before the end of June 2021.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

### **298.16 Review Calendar of Tasks**

The Parish Clerk invited the Parish Council to review and update the Policy and Document List (copies of which had been circulated).

RESOLVED – That the following be added to the “Policy and Document List”, to be reviewed annually at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council:

- Standing Orders.
- Financial Regulations.
- Scheme of Delegation.

### **298. 17 Environment Reports**

The following issues were raised:

- Following the recent tampering of the Radar Speed Sign, there was a need to confirm that the Radar Speed Sign remained secure.
- The bins were full to capacity on Hallgate and needed to be emptied on a more regular basis.

It was noted that Chorley Borough Council’s Grounds Maintenance had been active in the village and the appearance of the village was looking good.

RESOLVED – That the reports be noted.

### **298.18 Reports from Parish Council representatives on Other Bodies**

The following confirmed that there were no updates to report:

- Chorley Liaison – Councillor Laura Lennox.
- Neighbourhood Working Group – Councillor Rod Fraser.
- Friends of Astley Park – Councillor John McAndrew.

Confidential item

### **298.19 Correspondence**

(i) Village Caretaker

The Parish Council discussed the arrangements for the return to work of the Village Caretaker and it was noted that the Parish Clerk had repeatedly contacted The Brothers of Charity regarding the Village Caretakers ability to undertake his duties from 29 March 2021 when the Government restrictions were relaxed.

RESOLVED – That the Parish Clerk be requested to write to the Village Caretaker and The Brothers of Charity confirming that that there was an expectation that he would return to work during the week commencing 17 May 2021.

(ii) Complaint

The Parish Clerk reported that he had received a complaint alleging (i) that the Parish Council had not sought the permission of the landowner prior to the planting of five trees on the Village Green in front of the shops/flats and (ii) the advice was unlawful.

RESOLVED – That the Parish Clerk be requested to respond to the complainant as discussed and confirming that no action was proposed in respect of the allegations.

**297.20 Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next meeting of the Parish Council would take place on Wednesday 7 July 2021 at 7pm.

The meeting concluded at 9.58pm.

Chair