



Astley Village Parish Council

Meeting of the Council

6 July 2022 at 7.00pm

Present

Councillor John McAndrew (Vice Chair) in the Chair; Councillors Keith Ashton, Emma Barraclough, Gillian Sharples and Chris Sheldon.

305.01 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Arnold Almond

The Parish Council noted that Councillor Almond was currently not well and the Parish Councillors extended their best wishes to him for a speedy recovery.

305.02 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 John McAndrew declared a Personal Interest as a Governor at Buckshaw Primary School.

305.03 Public Engagement

Members of the public are invited to put questions/make representations to the members of the Parish Council.

No questions/representations were made.

305.04 Borough/County Councillor Reports

Reports from Chorley North and Astley Ward Borough Councillors and County Councillor (Lancashire County Council) (copies of which had been circulated) were considered.

It was reported that the Cabinet at Chorley Borough Council had approved the West Way Play Area Contract Award Procedure on 16 June 2022 and Councillor Alistair Morwood offered to provide Councillors Keith Ashton and Matt Lynch with a copy of the tender document.

Councillors expressed concern at the standard of the carriageway repairs undertaken near the roundabout at the entrance to Astley Village and noted that the repairs did not appear to be of the same standard as adjacent areas. Councillor Aidy Riggott explained that it was often more cost efficient to carryout treatments that preserve roads that were in a good condition to ensure that any future repairs were not cost prohibitive in the future, and that many more roads can be treated and maintained by utilising this approach.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

305.05 Minutes

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the Annual meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 4 May 2022 (copies of which had been circulated) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

It was noted that under Minute 304.10, the Parish Council had not been invited to appoint a representative to the Friends of Astley Park, but Councillor John McAndrew would continue to provide updates at meetings of the Parish Council.

305.06 Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting to enable the Parish Council to discuss the merits of candidates which inevitably could include their personal attributes and therefore be prejudicial (Minute 305.08(i)).

305.07 Parish Clerk Report

The Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on ongoing projects, work outstanding and activities since the last meeting of the Parish Council.

Millennium Notice Board

The new outdoor dual door noticeboard and steel sub frame had now been installed.

Trees Planted by the Parish Council, Chancery Road. Astley Village

The Parish Clerk reported that he had now received the Section 96 License from Lancashire County Council for the trees on Chancery Road. The Parish Clerk suggested that as part of setting the budget for 2023/24, consideration be given to allocating a contingency budget for the future maintenance of the trees planted by the Parish Council.

Astley Hall

Chorley Borough Council had suggested that the grant of £2,000 towards the renovation of Astley Hall be used towards the restoration of the painting of Lady Susannah's mother, recently purchased by Chorley Borough Council at auction.

Remembrance Community Garden in Astley Village

The Parish Council considered the feedback received from the consultation with residents via the Spring Newsletter. It was noted that a resident of Astley Village (and ex-Teacher and Garden Designer) had offered assistance and this was being followed

up by Councillors Almond and Sheldon. It was suggested that the project at this stage be referred to as the “**Community Garden in Astley Village**”.

Chorley Flower Show

Councillor Emma Barraclough provided an update at the meeting.

Community Litter Picks

Councillors Keith Ashton and John McAndrew confirmed that they would be preparing an article will be prepared for inclusion in the Winter Newsletter in relation to the introduction of Community Litter Picks organised by the Parish Council.

West Way Ponds Community Nature Reserve and Wildlife Educational Project

Councillor Barraclough reported that the enhancement of the site was moving forward. The Ranger Team (Chorley Borough Council) had carried out any urgent works and replaced the missing plank from the viewing platform and strimmed back the vegetation.

Quotes had been sought to tarmac the path linking from the Sports Hub to Wymundsley and quotes were in the process of being sought to remove the old boundary fencing, replace the timber boardwalks with non-slip planks, resurface the paths with fresh aggregate and create a small forest school education area for Buckshaw Primary School to use. Any non-native trees would be removed from the site to open up some of the canopy to let in more light to the other trees and pond.

Once the cost of the works were known, Chorley Borough Council would explore potential external funding streams that could be available and arrange a further meeting with the Parish Council.

Leasing of the Grass Pitches to Astley and Buckshaw Junior Football Club

The Parish Council noted the response from Mr Simon Forster, Open Space Strategy Officer at Chorley Borough Council.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the expenditure approved by the Parish Clerk, 1st Euxton Scouts, Delivery of Spring Newsletter - £81.25, Chorley Borough Council, Room Hire (Community Centre) - £32.40, Vista Print, Chorley Flower Promotion Items - £201.68*, Printwise, Printing of Spring Newsletter - £590.00, Hartwood Maintenance, Maintenance of Planters - £280.00, SLCC, Annual Membership Fee - £112 and Internal Auditors Fee - £75 in accordance with Standing Order 16.2 be noted.

*The Parish Council subsequently received a refund of £52.18 making the total £149.50 (excluding VAT).

(3) That the Parish Clerk be authorised to place an order with White Hill Direct Ltd for the purchase of two direction fingerpost signs at a cost not exceeding £1,400 (excluding VAT as agreed by the Parish Council on 3 March 2021) and sign the licence with Chorley Borough Council on behalf of the Parish Council in accordance with Standing Order (5) for the installation of the signs at the following two locations:

- Chancery Road (near the subway) to the new West Way Sports Hub and the Village Centre.

- Judeland Wood to Astley Park.

(4) That the experimental traffic order to make Chancery Road one way for the Chorley Flower Show at the end of July 2022 be reviewed by Chorley Borough Council and the Parish Council following the event taking place.

(5) That Chorley Borough Council be requested to provide an image of the painting of Lady Susannah's mother and the estimate from the Lancashire Conservation Studios for the restoration of the painting recently purchased at auction.

(6) That the Parish Clerk be requested to arrange a meeting of the Village Development Working Group to be held via Zoom to progress the proposed Community Garden in Astley Village.

(7) That the Parish Clerk be requested to clarify whether the response from Mr Simon Forster, Chorley Borough Council, in respect of leasing of the grass pitches to Astley and Buckshaw Junior Football Club related to the 'Pony Field', West Way Sports Hub or both.

305.08 Statutory Business

(i) Co-option to the Parish Council Vacancy

The Parish Clerk reported that expressions of interest had been received from four residents, subsequently reduced to three following one application being withdrawn.

Members had been provided with details of the applicants and their submissions.

Prior to the meeting, members and candidates had been provided with detailed arrangements of how the co-option procedure would be conducted,

The Parish Clerk reported that for a candidate to be co-opted to the Parish Council, it was necessary for them to obtain an absolute majority of votes cast (50% + 1 of the votes available at the meeting. If there was still a vacancy at the end of the election process, the vacancy would be advertised again, and the co-option process repeated until a candidate was successfully co-opted to the Parish Council (or until the vacancy is filled by normal election).

The following applicants were then given the opportunity to make a brief presentation prior to members holding an election to fill the vacancies and confirmed that they fulfilled the qualifications for standing for election:

- Ian Charles Thomas.
- Roderick Duncan Fraser.
- Matthew Eric Ellison Frohock

The press and public be excluded from the meeting to enable the Parish Council to discuss the merits of candidates which inevitably could include their personal attributes.

In accordance with Standing Order (9) it was:

RESOLVED - That the vote be held by signed ballot (anonymous ballot).

The three candidates were included in the election to co-opt to the vacancies, and the votes were cast as follows:

Ian Charles Thomas	5 votes.
Roderick Duncan Fraser	0 votes.
Matthew Eric Ellison Frohock	4 votes.

It was then:

RESOLVED – (1) That Mr Ian Thomas and Mr Matthew Ellison Frohock be co-opted on to the Parish Council.

Councillors Mr Ian Thomas and Mr Matthew Ellison Frohock signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting.

(2) The Parish Clerk be requested to extend the date for expressions of interest in relation to the current vacancy to Sunday 28 August 2022 to enable any applications to be considered at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

(ii) 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 applications received by Chorley Borough Council:

- the replacement and raising of roof, rear dormer and front roof lights at 3 Long Copse, Astley Village, Chorley PR7 1TH (Reference: 22/00634/FULHH). The deadline for any representations was 8 July 2022.
- front two storey gabled porch, single storey rear extension and internal alterations at 38 Merefield, Astley Village, Chorley, PR7 1UR (Reference: 22/00668/FULHH). The deadline for any representations was 19 July 2022.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and no representations be made.

305.09 Financial Matters

(i) Financial Position

The Responsible Financial Officer submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) showing the financial position as at 29 June 2022.

He reported that a number of queries had been raised by PKF Littlejohn LLP, the Parish Council's External Auditor in relation to the AGAR Part 3 and supporting documentation for the financial year 2021/22. The query (in bold) and the explanation provided, which had been accepted by the External Auditors were as follows:

Section 2, Box 3: the current unexplained variance from the previous year for this box was £1,171 which was above 15%

The VAT refund received for the financial year 2019/20 (received in the financial year 2020/21) was £1,894.25. Due to COVID-19, the ability for the Parish Council to undertake work was affected which meant the level of expenditure was lower than had been budgeted for. In turn the VAT refund received for the financial year 2020/21 (received in the financial year 2021/22) was only £761.68 (a difference of £1,132.57 which explains the variance).

Section 2, Box 6: the current unexplained variance from the previous year for this box is £1,292 which was above 15%

Due to COVID-19, the ability for the Parish Council to undertake work was affected which meant the level of expenditure in 2020/21 was lower than had been budgeted for (£6,277). With the lifting of restrictions in the financial year 2021/22, some of the work planned for 2020/21 was able to be carried out resulting in the expenditure shown (£8,069).

Section 2, Box 7: the total reserves figure was more than twice Box 2. (i.e., £40,700 being twice the Precept levied)

Below was a breakdown of the reserves held:

- £2,000 Employee Contingency.
- £35,000 earmarked/ringfenced contribution to new play area at West Way Sports Hub.
- £2,000 earmarked/ringfenced grant towards the restoration of Astley Hall.
- £5,000 Election Reserve.

RESOLVED – (1) That the financial position be noted.

(2) That the explanation provided by the Responsible Financial Officer in relation to the queries had been raised by PKF Littlejohn LLP, the Parish Council's External Auditor in relation to the AGAR Part 3 and supporting documentation for the financial year 2021/22 be endorsed.

(ii) Payments to be Approved

The Responsible Financial Officer submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) recommending a list of invoices to be paid between 1 July 2022 and 31 July 2022 as follows:

Date	Creditor	Description	Total	Vat	Net
08/07/22	Employee 4	Reimbursements (May 2022)	54.25		54.25
08/07/22	Employee 4	Reimbursements (June 2022)	38.50		38.50
01/07/22	Easy Web Sites	Monthly rental	62.40	10.40	52.00
23/07/22	Zoom	Zoom Subscription (July 2022)	14.39	2.40	11.99

15/07/22	Employee 2	Salary (July 2022)	82.33		82.33
15/07/22	Employee 4	Salary (July 2022)	313.00		313.00
15/07/22	HMRC	Tax (July 2022)	7.03		7.03
01/08/22	Easy Web Sites	Monthly rental	62.40	10.40	52.00
23/08/22	Zoom	Zoom Subscription (August 2022)	14.39	2.40	11.99
15/08/22	Employee 2	Salary (August 2022)	82.33		82.33
15/08/22	Employee 4	Salary (August 2022)	310.20		310.20
15/08/22	HMRC	Tax (August 2022)	77.40		77.40
			1,118.62	25.60	1,093.02

RESOLVED – (1) - That approval be given to the payments as detailed above.

(2) That the Parish Clerk be requested to explore the practicalities of pausing the Zoom Subscription when not required.

(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 – (1) - That the report be noted.

(2) That the Parish Clerk be requested to purchase ID badges for Parish Councillors.

(iv) Review of Asset Register

The Parish Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) inviting the Parish Council to review the Asset Register.

RESOLVED – That the revised Asset Register and Insurance Value for each asset as suggested be approved subject to:

- The asset the value of the Millennium Notice Board being amended to £1,200, to reflect the purchase of the new outdoor dual door noticeboard and steel sub frame.
- The 24 trees Planted by the Parish Council, Chancery Road. Astley Village being added to the asset register.
- The direction fingerpost signs being added to the Asset Register once purchased.

305.10 Newsletter

The Parish Clerk reported that the Spring Newsletter had been printed the week commencing Monday 9 May 2022 and distributed during May 2022.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

305.11 Christmas Event Planning

The Parish Clerk reported that the Community Centre had been booked for Thursday 8 December 2022 from 6 – 9pm for the 2022 Christmas Event.

RESOLVED – That (1) That the Christmas Carol Singing be held round the Christmas Tree in front of the shops on Thursday 8 December 2022 at 7pm and the Parish Clerk be requested to invite Parklands Academy School Band to play at the event.

(2) That the Parish Council should provide refreshments in the Community Centre following the Christmas Carol Singing.

(3) The electricians be requested to put the lights on the tree and test them on Wednesday 1 December 2022.

(4) Invitations to attend the event be sent to all residents via the Winter Newsletter/posters in the Parish Council Noticeboards and the Chair be requested to write to Ravensthorpe, and the local Wards/County Councillors inviting them to attend.

305.12 Environment Reports

It was reported that fly-tipping had taken place at Broadfields.

305.13 Reports from Parish Council representatives on Other Bodies

Chorley Liaison

A copy of the minutes from the last meeting held on 16 March 2022 had been circulated with the Summons. The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 20 July 2022.

Neighbourhood Area Meeting (NW Parishes and Chorley North)

The Parish Clerk reported that he had attended a meeting of the Neighbourhood Area Meeting (NW Parishes and Chorley North) on Wednesday, 29 June 2022. A copy of the agenda and minutes from the meeting held on 31 January 2022 had been circulated with the Summons. The next meeting will be held on 9 February 2023 at 6.30 pm.

RESOLVED – That the reports be noted.

305.14 Correspondence

Correspondence received had been reported as part of the 'Parish Clerk Report' (Minute 305.07). In addition, the Parish Clerk reported that he had received:

- concern from a resident of the Farthings at the number of events held in Astley Park including ChorFest.
- complaints had been received regarding the lack of grass cutting on the areas owned by A.P.A. Blackpool Limited off Hallgate, Astley Village.

RESOLVED – That the Parish Clerk be requested to write to A.P.A. Blackpool Limited making them aware of the complaints received regarding the lack of grass cutting in front and behind the shops at Hallgate.

305.15 Date of Next Meeting

To note that the next meeting of the Parish Council would take place on Wednesday 7 September 2022 at 7pm.

The meeting concluded at 9.05 pm.

Chair