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**Briercliffe with Extwistle Parish Council**

**Thursday 30th May 2024 7.30pm**

**Present:** Councillors Roger Frost (Chair), Vicky Balmer, Michael Greenwood, Gordon Lishman, Pippa Lishman, John Marlow, Michael McFarlane, and Richard Sagar.

**In Attendance:** County Councillor Townley, Borough Councillors M Lishman and A Kelly, R Greenwood (Temp Clerk), plus 2 residents.

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| The Chair opened the Parish Council Meeting and welcomed all to the meeting. | | | | | |
| **Parish Council Agenda** | | **Actions by Clerk** | **Cllr Support** | | |
| **23/24/113 Announcements** | | | | | |
| The Meeting was advised that it would be audio recorded. | |  |  | | |
| **23/24/114 Apologies for absence** | | | | | |
| Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr L Lalor. | |  |  | | |
| **23/24/115 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary** **Interest** | | | | | |
| Councillor Roger Frost expressed a general interest in the Planning Applications having worked with the planning department of Burnley Borough Council.  Councillors P Lishman and G Lishman declared a non-pecuniary interest in the CVS. | |  |  | | |
| **23/24/116 To elect a Chair for the municipal year 2024/2** | | | | | |
| It was proposed that Councillor Gordon Lishman be elected as the Chair for 2024/25. Proposed by MG Seconded RS. All were in favour. Cllr G Lishman was duly elected as Chair. | |  |  | | |
| **23/24/117 To elect a Vice Chair for the Municipal year 2024 /25** | |  |  | | |
| It was proposed that Councillor Michael McFarlane be elected as Vice Chair for 2024/2025. Proposed by GL Seconded by VB. All were in favour and Cllr McFarlane was duly elected as Vice Chair. | |  |  | | |
| GL thanked RF for his work as Chair over last 8 months, during which the Council had relied greatly on his knowledge and experience during a time of unusual and extreme pressure. | |  |  | | |
| **23/24/118 To approve the minutes of the last meeting of the parish council** | | | | | |
| The minutes of the meeting held 13th May 2024 were accepted and signed as a true record. Proposed by RF and seconded by RS. All were in favour. | |  |  | | |
| **23/24/119 Matters Arising from the last minutes:** | | | | | |
| 1. The overpayment on the allotment rent by a tenant is in hand. 2. The broken fence on Douglas Way is to be mended by the Parish Council. The damage at Roggerham Gate is to be repaired. The sign needs to be collected from local resident. 3. Cllr Frost is awaiting a reply from the Charity Commission re the Halstead Charity. | |  | PL  PL  RF | | |
| **23/24/120 Working Groups and Lead Roles** | | | | | |
| Recommendations to confirm lead roles:   * Allotments & Garages - Cllrs P Lishman and M Greenwood to continue, joined by members to support * Planning – Cllr R Frost to Lead with Cllr R Sagar * Communication – all members; lead Cllr P Lishman * Contractor – Cllr V Barmer lead with support from P Lishman * Projects – Lead Cllr M Greenwood, with Cllr J Marlow and support from Cllr V Barmer and all as required * Policies – continue Cllr L Lalor (Risk Register) and Cllr G Lishman * Health & Safety – Cllr Lalor with support from Cllr G Lishman   RESOLVED – Group & Leads agreed.   1. Allotments & Garages –  * Cllrs P Lishman and M Greenwood are working on proposals of Allotment Committee as part of review of overall garages and allotments policies with support from National Allotment Society Regional Officers. * Proposal that Allotment Committee will consist of members of the Parish Council and representatives of the allotment tenants. The tenants will nominate and elect the tenants to the Committee.   Agreed/Resolved by all to agree in principle   * Cllrs Marlow and Greenwood have been volunteering cutting the allotment grass and installing fencing and gates, fixing taps, with Cllr P Lishman. These is not covered by the interim agreement with a Contractor. * The Gardening Club will plant up the village planters, a grant application has been successful for the flowers/compost. * There are two footpaths that need extensive works – this will cost up to £1,680. The Parish Council to apply for a grant if eligible. Equipment to be hired, materials bought, with volunteers to complete the works.   RESOLVED The spend for this was agreed with all in favour.   1. Planning - Cllr Frost gave an update on the recent applications:  * FUL/2024/0244 Windle Hill Farm * FUL/2024/0210 Banks Farm Barn * VAR/2024/0241 Land at Balderstone Lane  1. Projects  * The Bed Race will be held on 25th Aug 2024 * 6th July 2024 there will be a BBQ for allotment tenants. * 7th July 2024 there will be a picnic and traditional games day  1. Policies – Cllrs Lalor and G Lishman will lead on this. The following are on track.  * Finance policy – the draft regulations are ready to be reviewed. * Risk Assessment and Risk Register is underway. * Standing Orders – Cllr G Lishman is working through these. * The Asset Register is being updated and issues have been identified. Christmas Lights to be collected from storage, PAT to be confirmed  1. Contractors – The interim (3 months) Lengthsman position has been filled, 1st two cuts have been completed. A future proposal for the Lengthsman role is needed for next meeting, to include odd jobs, planting and watering etc. 2. Communications Working Group update on website to follow | | Clerk  Clerk  Clerk  Clerk | PL/MG  MG/JM  PL  PL/MG  LL  GL  GL  GL  VB/PL  All | | |
| Other Councillor reports  Cllr P Lishman – Reminder for monthly litter pick event this Sunday, all welcome to help | |  |  | |
| **23/24/121 The meeting was formally adjourned for Public Participation.** | | | | | |
| 1. No Police report has been received this month 2. A question was received about the lack of information on the website. The reply was that the Parish Council has no access at present to the website and is commissioning a new one. Response has been emailed direct to questioner. 3. The Community Centre report was read out. This is attached to the minutes. The Community Centre requested inclusion in the next newsletter. 4. County Councillor Towneley presented her report:-  * Congratulating the new Parish Councillors on their roles and welcomed Temporary Clerk. * It is Foster Carer Fortnight, information and publicity can be found on LCC’s website. * There was a request to be vigilant around Public Rights of Way as there have been a number of complaints about access being obstructed or locked. * There is to be County wide Choir and Painting competitions. Competitors are sought for both categories. * Cllr Towneley reminded members about the County Council Members’ Grant specifically the Champion of Youth grant and the Champion for Older People Grant. * £5 million has been allocated across Lancashire to deal with potholes. * There is to be a recruitment fair for Volunteers being run by the CVS. Information on their website.  1. Borough Councillors did not have an update on their report which was included at the last meeting held on 13th May 2024. | | Clerk | GL  Comms Gp | | |
| **23/24/122 Formally reconvened the Parish Council Meeting** | | | | | |
| **23/24/123 Finance** | | | | | |
| 1. Accounts were approved for payment  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Cheque 1879 |  | Water Plus for allotments |  | £588.86 |  |  | | cheque 1880 |  | Howarth Timber nails for allotment |  | £7.56 |  |  | | cheque 1881 |  | Office ink and stamps |  | £23.50 |  |  | | cheque 1882 |  | The Allotment Society NSALG Ltd |  | £66.00 |  |  | | cheque 1883 |  | Scribe |  | £673.92 |  |  | | cheque 1884 |  | S Watson underpayment 2022/23 |  | £418.01 |  |  | | cheque 1885 |  | S Watson 2023 pay agreement |  | £270.48 |  |  | | cheque 1886 |  | David Joss Interim Lengthsman |  | £240.00 |  |  | | cheque 1887 |  | Lanlee for allotments |  | £125.28 |  | 1,817.19 | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Standing order | | Clerks salary April |  | £457.80 |  |  | | Standing order | | Clerks salary May |  | £457.80 |  | 915.60 | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  | 2,732.79 | | | | | | |
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| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Paying in slip 261 | | Allotment day |  | £2,253.96 |  |  | | paying in slip 262 | | Allotment Rent |  | £208.61 |  |  | | Paying in slip 263 | | Cash said to be remaining from sale of Gritter for £200 minus payment of £137 to former Councillor for purchase of Easter material, all from some years previously. |  | £63.00 |  |  | | Paying in slip 264 | | Allotment Rent |  | £115.18 |  |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Grant |  | LCC Footpaths |  | £500.00 |  |  | | Grant |  | LCC Biodiversity |  | £300.00 |  | 3,440.75 | | | | | | |
| **23/24/124 Bank Mandates** Cllr G Lishman reported on the current position in relation to signatories on the GL  Council’s accounts It was agreed that the signatories on all three Parish Council  bank accounts would be Cllrs Balmer, Frost, Greenwood, G :Lishman, Marlow,  and McFarlane.  **23/24/125 Review by Borough Council**  It was reported that Cllr G Lishman had arranged with Burnley Borough Council’s  Finance Director for the Borough Council’s Internal Audit team to review the Parish  Council’s financial administration.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **23/24/126 Finance to approve CVS wages package** | | | | | |
| The CVS offers a payroll service at the cost of £11 per month. The temporary Clerk will be paid using this service. Proposed VB and seconded RS. For note: Cllrs P Lishman and G Lishman refrained from voting. All other Cllrs in favour. It was **resolved** that the Temporary Clerk be paid via this payroll service. |  | | |  | |
| **23/24/127 Finance - War Memorial Tarmacking Tender** | | | | | |
| Not all contractors have submitted their tenders for the tarmacking at War Memorial. Any decision has been deferred to be included in the next agenda for next meeting. | Clerk | | |  | |
| **23/24/128 Finance Website.** | | | | | |
| Further to Easyweb being chosen at the meeting held 13th May 2024, the contract has now been signed. |  | | |  | |
| **23/24/127 Orchard Grant** | | | | | |
| The Parish Council has been invited to apply for LCC’s Orchard Grant. The location for the orchard will be at the bottom of the football pitch on the George IV Recreational Grounds. This will help with drainage and the area is not being used. Suggestions were made to liaise with Gary Howell and Henry Nazareth Kay at Burnley Borough Council for their advice and guidance. | Clerk | | | MG / JM | |
| **23/24/128 Briercliffe Community Football Club.** | | | | | |
| The draft lease has been completed. Cllr P Lishman to liaise with members of the club. Cllr Sagar is to check the document and to be circulated to all members. Following approval of all members Cllrs J Marlow, P Lishman and G Lishman will sign and witness the lease with the leaders of the club. |  | | | PL/JM/  GL | |
| **23/24/129 Date of future meetings.** | | | | | |

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| July 11th 2024  August 8th 2024  September 5th 2024  October 10th 2024  November 7th 2024  December 5th 2024  January 16th 2025  February 6th 2025  March 6th 2025  April 3rd 2025  May 8th 2025 |

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| The public section of the meeting closed at 9.10pm |

**Chairs Report**

I have decided not to read the whole of this Report for two reasons. Firstly, we have a lot of business to transact and, secondly, there are only a few members of the public in attendance. Though I intend to give you a summary of the Report this evening I intend to ask our Temporary Clerk to add this Report to the Minutes of the Annual Meeting.

Members will recall that, earlier in the Parochial Year, five members of the Parish Council resigned. This left only four members in place. They asked me if I would be the Chairman of the Parish Council, hopefully for the remainder of the year. I agreed on condition that I should be allowed to retire, as Chairman at that time. I think that this is my seventh Chairmanship, and it is likely to be my last.

In November, 2023 an election was held and I am happy to say that five new members were elected, all of them interested in Briercliffe and each one of whom has turned out to be a great acquisition of the Parish Council, their interests and expertise reflecting much of what is needed in a Council which has gone through difficult times in the last four or more years.

We have appointed a Temporary Clerk, in R Greenwood. I want to thank R Greenwood for all that she has done for us since she took up her present appointment about three months ago. I also want to thank the three members (Cllrs Gordon. Pippa Lishman and Cllr Michael Greenwood) who, with me, remained on the Parish Council when the five resigned last year. Each of them has worked tirelessly in the roles which were apportioned to them. Similarly, I would also want to thank our now members (Cllrs. Vicky Balmer, Libby Lalor, John Marlow, Michael McFarlane and Richard Sagar). They have all made important contributions to our work and it has been a delight working with them.

However, as I have indicated, this has not been a very easy time for the Parish Council. The reasons for this will become clear as the 2024/05 year progresses. It has been very difficult for me. Not only have we had to deal with exceptional circumstances, but I have been unwell and, for much of my time in office and because of rebuilding work at home, I have not living there for much of the time since the New Year, though I am back there now.

All that said, with everyone working together, the Parish Council is now getting back on track. Things have been so divergent from what they should be that it is going to take some time to get where we want to be.

The following will give some idea of what we have been doing in the months since the resignations which took place last year:-

1. The Council has embarked on a full review of most of its policies. This has been necessary because of deficiencies in the policies adopted in recent years. In this we will be helped by the expertise within Burnley BC., our legal and employment advisers together with NALC and LALC.

2. Allotments/ Garages. A great deal of work has been carried out in the management of the allotment gardens, pens, smallholdings and garages. Rents had not been collected for two years. I asked two colleagues to let me know if they (Cllr. Pippa Lishman and Cllr Michael Greenwood) could collect the rent for the year 2023/4. They told me that it could be though a great deal of work would have to be undertaken. It is normally the role of the Clerk to undertake the collection of rents but it was clear that he could not do this work. The rents had to be collected and that has been done though, as yet, it is not clear as to what % of this rent has been collected. The process of collecting the rents for the year 2024/5 is well under way.

2a. In the months since I took the chair the number of allotments has increased to over 160. Work has continued, successfully, to create a number of smaller, starter allotments which have been in demand, by potential tenants for a number of years. Almost all of our allotment tenancies are now let.

2b. The Council is aware that there is a lot of work to be undertaken on the allotments – improving paths, drainage and some of the open spaces in the allotments. This, and other work, will be commenced in the financial year, 2024/5. The Parish Council wants to hear what improvements tenants would like to see, so they will be consulted before a plan is agreed and work commences. It is intended that the Constitution of the Allotments Committee will be altered to allow tenants direct representation on the Committee.

3. Library Clinic. The Parish Council became aware that the Lancashire County Council (LCC) has decided to sell the site upon which the former Library Clinic stands. This includes Briercliffe Community Centre and the adjacent Car Park. Discussions were held with the LCC., on the basis that the Community Centre, and its associated parking, should be protected and remain for the use of local people. At the time of writing nothing has been decided though professional Reports, from experts hired by the Parish Council, have indicated that the former Library Clinic is not is as good condition as it was thought to be. Discussions are on-going.

4. Events. An important role of a Parish Council is to provide facilities and events for local residents.

4a. With regard to facilities for sport, Briercliffe PC works with Burnley BC., the Queen Street Recreation Ground, which is in the ownership of the Parish Council, providing facilities not only for Briercliffe but also for part of eastern Burnley. The Borough Council contributes to the maintenance of this facility. The Bowling Green is also owned by the Parish Council, but leased to the Briercliffe Bowling Club and is in a different position. The Parish Council has been approached, by the Club, To resolve maintenance problems. These are being considered at the moment. Tenders have been prepared. Briercliffe Parish Council wants to work with other sporting and entertainment providers. It is working with the football club and the Briercliffe Festival Committee for use of the Recreation Grounds.

4b. Events for the community have been instigated. These include a successful Bonfire Night event, for allotment tenants, which took place in 2023. This will be repeated in future years. Several events have been held of children at the Recreation Ground. Regular litter picking events have been commenced. The Remembrance Day Service was organised again, by the Parish Council, in November, 2023, and was very well attended.

5. Information Boards. The Viewing Platform and the Information Board on the Woodland Walk, which were provided by the last Parish Council, and partly funded by Haggate Baptists, has proved such a success that another Information Board is to be placed in Duke Street Gardens which are owned by Burnley Borough Council but maintained by Briercliffe Parish Council. It is hoped that, when funds are available, other Boards will be placed at heritage locations elsewhere within the Parish. One has been mooted for Thursden Picnic site and another for the Roggerham area. Other Heritage (history and environment projects) are being considered.

6. Planning. The Briercliffe Parish Council has continued to carry out its role as a Statutory Consultee of the Burnley BC and the LCC. In recent months an application for a large Wedding Venue, at Rockwood Manor, Halifax Road, Nelson has been REFUSED by Pendle Borough Council. Briercliffe Parish Council was amongst numerous organisations and residents that objected to the application. Two of the potential applications, one for a Wind Farm, at Widdop, the other for a Solar Panel Farm, in Briercliffe, may be impending. The first of these is not in Briercliffe and is within the area of Calderdale BC but the Parish Council will be keeping is eye on this potential application as it will on the solar panel application.

I have only given you only a flavour of what the Parish Council has been doing in the past eight or nine months or so. The Council is trying to involve as many local people as possible to become involved with its activities. This has not been easy because the Council has not enjoyed access to its own website. The reasons for this can not be included in this Report but suffice it to say that the Council is working to set up a new website. Similarly, it will be publishing a regular Newsletter which will be delivered to all houses in the Civil Parish.

Roger Barstow Frost MBE., MA., FRSA.

Chairman of Briercliffe Parish Council, 2023/24.

**Briercliffe Community Centre**

**Annual Report 2023 -2024**

**Background:**

The Community Centre was built in the late 90s after public fundraising and small grants from Age Concern and LCC. It is run by a small committee of 4 and is a registered charity with 2 trustees. It occupies land owned by Lancashire County Council and originally had a 20 year lease which ran out years ago and has never been renewed. Ultimately the building belongs to Briercliffe Parish Council. We have not paid any ground rent to LCC for over 20 years.

The Community Centre has run itself financially apart from about 8 years in the 2010s when the PC precepted specifically for £1,500 to support the centre. In 2020 we got 2 x Covid 19 grants totalling £19,000. This meant we could completely refurbish and renovate. We replaced all the kitchen appliances, had new worktops fitted, the outside areas were cleaned and cut back, everywhere decorated, the outside of the building pebble-dashed and made waterproof and new flooring in the kitchen. There shouldn’t be major work needed in the near future.

We have regular groups during the week and parties at weekends and are now financially independent again. Our Booking Agent keeps the diary and takes bookings and collects money for parties which she passes on to the Treasurer. The Treasurer bills regular groups monthly or quarterly. Each regular group has to sign to accept a key and agree that they would replace all keys and locks if they lost the key. The Treasurer keeps a record of key holders for insurance purposes. When the Booking Agent rents out the rooms each user receives a copy of the terms and conditions and signs to accept them. They take a copy and the Booking Agent keeps one.

Our financial year is the calendar year and our AGM is in January after the annual audit of accounts. There are annual gas checks (latest 25th January 2024), electricity PAT checks (latest 18th March 2024), carbon monoxide checks, fire extinguisher checks, emergency lighting checks done by a professional company and regular recorded fire door checks. Certificates are on the noticeboard. We work with a company to find us the best deals for Utilities.

Building and contents are fully insured and there is public liability insurance. User groups insure their own items.

There is a cleaner once a week and users agree to clean up after themselves. The Booking Agent checks the building after any private events.

Any safety issues are reported by Booking Agent or cleaner and we have a list of professionals who can attend to any problems quickly.

**Finance:**

In 2023 rental income was £4419, an increase £515 on the previous year. The total utility bill was £2742 an increase of £822. The Committee agreed to raise rent for the first time in 10 years to help mitigate the fuel cost.

Charities and voluntary groups pay a different hourly rate from businesses and profit-making events.

Accounts are audited by a professional at the end of every financial year.

The accounts and balance sheet are available for anyone to see and the information was shared with Councillors a few months ago. At the beginning of this financial year in January there was £9729.49 in the bank.

So far this year the only large bill has been £2,900 for the pebble dashing across the front to make the wall waterproof after some bricks were crumbling. At the end of April there is £6,500 in the bank.

There are some sessions available for groups and events and if the PC do a newsletter please can we show our existing groups and advertise for more?

**Chair and Treasurer – Anne Kelly**

**Secretary – Roger Frost**

**Booking Agent – Christine Stuttard**

**Committee member – Susan Me**