

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF PRESTON CAPES PARISH COUNCIL  
held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall**

<b>Present:</b>	Dixie Hughes (DH)	Chairman & Highways Warden
	Bill Dearn (BD)	Vice Chairman & Finances Reviewer
	Sophia Maddison (SM)	Councillor
	Graham Stanton (GS)	Councillor
	David Cox (DC)	Councillor & Tree Warden
	Gary Denby (GD)	Parish Clerk & RFO

**Public:** None.

**Welcome and any announcements from the Chair**

DH welcomed Councillors to the meeting.

**1. Apologies received**

Cllr Scilla Smith                      Cllr Rosie Mansfield (busy lambing)

**2.1 Receive minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

The meeting minutes were approved as an accurate record, proposed by SM, seconded by GS and approved by all present, signed by the Chairman.

**2.2 Receive minutes of Extra Parish Council Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

This was to discuss a planning application. The meeting minutes were approved as an accurate record, proposed by BD, seconded by SM and approved by all present, signed by the Chairman.

**3. Public time – None.**

**4. Councillor declaration of interest in the following agenda items**

DH with regards item 9.3 (BD to Chair item as DH reports from PCVH).

**5. Matters arising from the minutes**

5.1 Ref 5.2: Update on the training record of Parish Councillors - in progress **GD**

5.2 Ref 5.3: Update on the erection of a post for the speed sign - ongoing **DH**

5.3 Ref 5.6: Asset register to be update by Clerk with regards grit bins **GD**

5.4 Ref 5.8: Arranging a working party to reduce wild plum tree in Little Preston **DC**

5.5 Ref 6.7: Update with regards availability of the mowing grant for 2019: The Clerk has seen an emailed acknowledgement from Sheila Gilder at KierWSP from 31<sup>st</sup> Jan 2019, acknowledging receipt of the former Clerk's signed agreement for verge mowing in 2019 dated 8 Jan 2019. The actual document remains elusive. Meanwhile, on 19 Mar Sheila Gilder acknowledged the delay to paying the mowing grant for 2018 (some odd excuse about a technical details change). It should be paid through TradeShift by the end of March 2019 **GD**.

5.6 Ref 10: Update with regards plans for the Litter Pick DH – see section 7.

## 6. Correspondence

- 6.1 21 Feb: Thank you note from former Clerk Sharon Foster for flowers
- 6.2 21 Feb: DDC + ACRE Good Neighbour Scheme survey
- 6.3 21 Feb: N-CALC mini update (Great British Spring Clean)
- 6.4 21 Feb: Daventry District Forum: Enhancing life for the over fifties
- 6.5 21 Feb: Notice of St Peter & St Paul Quiz & Buffet on 22 Feb
- 6.6 21 Feb: Background on the enhanced PFCC role
- 6.7 4 Mar: Polling places review – kindly completed by DH
- 6.8 6 Mar: Calor Rural Community Funding – in case Councillors know of any needs

## 7. Update for the Spring Litter Pick: Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April

BD reported that the village litter pick will be later than planned, since the equipment was already allocated for the dates suggested. It is now arranged for Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April (Palm Sunday), with equipment scheduled for delivery by DDC the preceding Friday and returned on 15<sup>th</sup> April; the litter collection point being as usual **BD**. **DH** will organise publicity of the event around the village; also for volunteers' bacon and rolls afterwards (on expenses). It was agreed that an October date should now be booked for the equipment **BD**.

SM reported on some initial investigations with regards the village obtaining their own litter picking kit. Prices can easily reach £33 per kit of gloves, grabber, bag hoop, high-vis vest.

## 8. Advance Notice of the forthcoming **Armed Forces Day (Sun 7<sup>th</sup> July)** and **the Merchant Navy Day (Sun 1<sup>st</sup> Sept)**, 11am at the village church.

DH reported upon these arrangements, with hopefully the Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire being able to attend one or other. The village hall bar will be open afterwards. It is appreciated that 7<sup>th</sup> July is the village Garden Festival (later in the afternoon).

## 9. **Planning (latest items available at [www.daventrydc.gov.uk/living](http://www.daventrydc.gov.uk/living))**

- 9.1 DA/2019/0105: Construction of ponds at Old Rectory, Church Way. A Public meeting was held on 12th March 2019 and its findings reported accordingly (2.2 above).
- 9.2 DA/2019/0136: Work on trees in a conservation area – Bentree House on Old Forge Lane. Overhanging branches and pollarding - advice only.
- 9.3 DA/2019/0181: Tree felling in a conservation area – Preston Capes Village Hall with regards removal of walnut tree on road boundary.

Councillors started from a position of wishing the tree to remain, given it is just maturing and producing bountiful walnuts, expected to live another 100+ years. Mr Venton is DDC's tree expert and on first inspection in 2018 suggested losing the wall and keeping the tree. DC is the Parish Council Tree Warden.

However, a site visit brought attention to a 5" diameter root that had undermined the boundary wall. This gave concerns whether a similar root might undermine the nearby village hall wall in the future (it was built in the 1940's and is not on a concrete raft).

Consideration was also given to the trunk of the tree which appears to derive from a bunch of whips planted together, giving it 4 or 5 main trunks each about 8" diameter. Thus those trunks leaning towards the village hall do not have the supporting strength of those on the opposite side, perhaps encouraging their breakage in a heavy wind and falling upon the village hall at some future date. Therefore it was with regret that Councillors concluded that they should support the application for this tree removal. All present were in favour. **GD** is to advise DDC.

## 10. Finances and Accounts

- 10.1 4 Jan: £2,068.68 in current account (printed at the bank)
- 10.2 11 Feb: £3,659.55 in business savings account (wrongly addressed statement)
- 10.3 6 Mar: Mandate confirmed by Lloyds to forward statements to new Clerk. On 11 March they forwarded a February statement sheet to the new Clerk's address (final balance £1,527.80). This includes the clearance of cheques 492, 493 and 494 from Feb 2019. This balance is £182.11 higher than that calculated for 19 Feb of £1,345.69 indicating an unknown income item or outstanding cheque(s) – to be resolved **GD**. The statement incorrectly has 1 London Road on the statement's address line!

The Clerk has been advised he must now apply for an on-line *delegated account*, mandated by councillors, which results in an access device, a card and an on-line password. Then he can download and print the online statements for formal auditing. This will take a long time to achieve and may require giving FULL ACCESS to the online account in order to transfer monies between the chequeing & savings accounts.

The Clerk recommended a simplification of the banking arrangements (avoid on-line):-

- a) Transfer of the savings account monies (00716728) to the chequeing account (00287428) and close the savings account since performing so poorly (15p per month interest). Thus the chequeing account will hold the full cash reserves. No transfers!
- b) Change the chequeing account to have monthly printed statements (not online).
- c) Correct the chequeing account address to read 10A Lime Avenue, Eydon, Daventry. NN11 3PG.
- d) After 31<sup>st</sup> March, to request printed statements to be supplied for April 2018 – March 2019 for auditing of the chequeing account (find where the 'extra amount' came from).
- e) To ensure that Sharon Foster has been removed from both of the accounts (may require another bank mandate).
- f) Later in the year, for the Clerk to investigate if any reasonable savings schemes are available to the council (perhaps the TSB?) for deposit of the election reserve £2,000 with an annual interest payment and statement **GD**.

The Clerk is aware that Unity Trust Bank has developed an on-line banking that is tailored to Parish Council needs [www.unity.co.uk/who-we-help](http://www.unity.co.uk/who-we-help) It permits the Clerk to originate payments (prepare the 'online cheques'), after which the councillors sign-in and approve them to permit payment. However, it may cost £60 per year to operate. This is perhaps something for the future, when cheques are finally killed off.

It was agreed by councillors that **BD** shall visit the Daventry bank branch in early April to see if he can arrange the above as a main signatory on behalf of the parish council.

- 10.4 Ref 12.2: Review of Parish Council budget for 2019-20. GD provided printouts of a first draft spreadsheet for the full accounts to the end of year 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. This now shows a running total of account balances, with emboldened items matching the balances reported in the minutes (the statements still not available). It indicates an end of year cash reserve of £1,459.33 in the chequeing account, with £3,659.55 in the savings account, **a total of £4,727.78** after payments not yet evidenced by bank statements. There is sufficient in the chequeing account to see the Parish Council through to the next Precept receipt, without any (online) transfers.

GD developed the former Clerk's 2019-20 budget into one that shows the draft expenditure for 2018-19, the expenditures for the previous two years, the current

budget and that agreed for 2019-20. This is accompanied by explanations for the various expenditure items, including a split-out of the 'works budget' into a possible grant for the village hall. The Clerk's salary and expenses budget is also broken down to an hourly-rate salary, home-as-office expenses and other expenses, to reach a £2,300 total with another £100 allocated to training (Clerk or Councillors).

Taking the £4,272 end of year cash reserve, adding an outstanding VAT reclaim and the £200 budgeted towards the celebration reserve gives an estimate of cash assets for the end of year 2019-20 of £5,122. The final sheet allocates this to various renewable assets pots and cash reserves, to indicate the level of reserves shortfall. This led to discussions with councillors, concluding that:-

1. The bus shelter may be half way though its 100 year life
2. A modern replacement Parish Council tablet PC might be only £250
3. The well hand pumps are decorative in nature, meaning that there is no plan to replace them (nor an allocation required)
4. The traffic cones are a disposable item and should not be included

This refinement reduces the cash reserves 'shortfall' from an initial **-£3,305** to **-£1,760**. £2,000 of this is towards an elections reserve which is unlikely to be used. Thus the reserves shortfall is workable in the short-term, though would be better at nearer zero.

- 10.5 The Clerk has added more recent agendas and minutes to the Parish Council web site. Email conversation with its developer David Wilkinson reveals that it is backed-up daily and periodically, that he 'owns' the site name [prestoncaples.org.uk](http://prestoncaples.org.uk) and that there is no transfer provision in place, should he not be available. There is also no budget allocated to its maintenance or development, which should be addressed in the future.
- 10.6 A copy of the draft end-of-year accounts (10.4) has been provided to the former Clerk Sharon Foster, indicating her total taxable salary for the year was £1,796.94 with a further £239.59 in allowable expenses. This was within the budgeted £2,250.
- 10.7 The Clerk has been in telephone contact with P.M. Warden Environmental Services with regards the village mowing contract which expired in December 2018. Mr Warden has kindly agreed to a one year extension of his contract at short notice, at £140 + VAT per mowing. This should commence in March 2019 (his lambing permitting) and is confirmed by letter.
- 12.7 The following invoices were initialled and cheques signed on behalf of the Parish Council by DH and BD:-

Description / Power	Amount	VAT	Total
Village Hall hire Q1 Feb - Mar 6 hours @ £7.50/hr + Litter Pick hall use <b>on 14<sup>th</sup> April (revised)</b>	£30.00 £15.00		£45.00
Gary Denby Clerk gross remuneration for Mar 2019 (4 weeks) + Home as office expenses + 20% toner cartridges for 2019	£134.64 £24.00 £68.76		£227.40
Councillor expenses to Sophia Maddison for flowers to the previous Clerk	£23.00		£23.00

## 9. Councillors' Comments

- 9.1 DH reported that if leaving the EU on 29<sup>th</sup> March is postponed by the government, to the extent that the public are required to participate in the EU elections, the latter are set to be on Thursday 23d May. This would prevent the use of the village hall for the

planned Annual Parish Meeting. Councillors therefore agreed to change the date of the **Annual Parish meeting to Wed 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 GD.**

**10. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

Meeting ended at 9pm.

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Chairman

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Date