



Parish Meeting – Draft Minutes

Date:	8 May 2024		
Place:	Pendleton Village Hall - Pendleton		
Present:	Councillors: Houghton (Chair) Scholfield, Clemson and Wrightson.		
In attendance:	Clerk to the Council: Mike Hill, Borough Cllr. D. Birtwhistle, and L. Street. (part).		
Meeting started:	18:10	Meeting closed:	18:30

Minute Reference 240508/PM/

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Pursglove.

2. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH MEETING HELD ON 9 MAY 2023.

The minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 9 May 2023 were approved and signed by the Chair.

3. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIR.

The Chair's Annual Report is attached to these minutes.

4. DRAFT FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024.

The clerk updated members of the Council's financial position for the 12 months to the end of March 2024 and the report was received.

5. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE ELECTORS OF WISWELL.

No items were brought forward.

6. OPEN FORUM.

A discussion between Councillors took place regarding village activities.

Signed.

Date.

Annual Report from the Chair of Wiswell Parish Council, Councillor Stephen Houghton.



The past 12 months have once again been a year of considerable activity within our village and for the Parish Council.

A successful summer social was held to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III, which was attended by more than 130 residents. Blessed with fine weather amidst a series of summer downpours, we were once again delighted to welcome 'The Alan Pursglove Experience' as the live band for the day. For the second year running the Parish Council are indebted to Paula and David Clemson for hosting the event in the gardens of Lantern Cottage and to Oakhill School for the loan of their trestle tables.

In June, residents gathered in Coronation Garden for a guided five-mile walk up to the quarry, along to the Nick of Pendle and back to the Freemasons for much needed refreshment via Wymondhouses and Cold Cote farm. Along the way sites of local historic significance were pointed out such as Baby Towers, the quarry, the coffin stone, lead mines and Wymondhouses. Amongst the group there seemed to be some traction for further group walks in the local area and if there was a demand that would be relatively straight forward to set up.

The Freemason's Quiz Night has become a very popular event with our most recent evening in March attracting over 50 local 'quizzers'. With particular thanks to Paul and Sue Marlow, our regular quiz masters' for running the event on behalf of the village and to the Freemasons for hosting and providing a tasty pie and peas supper.

We are also grateful to the Freemasons for providing a pie and peas supper following the annual carol singing event and for hosting both the ladies and gents Christmas dinners.

The Remembrance Sunday commemorations are always well attended. This year it was given added poignancy by the reading of two World War 1 poems by pupils from Oakhill School. In addition, the Parish Council purchased a 'Tommy Silhouette' from the British Legion which Helen Thornber kindly agreed to locate in her field opposite the War Memorial. It is the Parish Council's intention to display the 'Tommy' figure during the lead up to and the weeks following Remembrance Sunday.

2025 will be the centenary of our War Memorial's unveiling and the Parish Council are seeking external funding to clean the stonework and refresh the lettering on the commemorative plaque.

Hot of the press.... On April 9 the Parish Council received confirmation from Ribble Valley Borough Council that it had been successful in securing a significant amount of funding to revamp the area around Coronation Garden, including the opportunity to refurbish the phone box with shelving for a library facility. Thanks to Sarah, Sue, Maureen and Edmund for their advice and ideas, many of which were incorporated within the Council's funding submission.

For the first time this year we held a 'Village Elders Event' hosted by Michael and Councillor Oi Mei Wrightson with help from Councillor Sarah Clemson. We had a pleasant afternoon tea exchanging memories of village past times and shared old photos, stories and historic documents relating to Wiswell.

Several residents have commented positively on the Parish Council's bench renovation project over the summer of 2023. Under the supervision and experienced eye of Edmund Sandham we were able to repair and refurbish a total of five benches including the metal bench on Pendleton Road and the Druice Barlow Memorial Bench.

A few residents have registered their surprise at the 'hike' in their annual council tax contribution to Wiswell Parish Council (the parish precept). As I mentioned in my annual report last year, Wiswell is a small parish council, with a precept for 2024/25 of £9,167, it does however have similar fixed costs to parish councils with precepts of £30,000 to £40,000, and the fixed costs continue to rise.

For example, 85% of Wiswell's Parish Council's income is taken up with administrative costs (clerk salary, insurance, web site and email hosting etc.) compared to a larger adjacent parish council, where less than 50% of their income is spent on administration. Setting a lower precept would just cover the Parish Council's administrative costs, leaving very little money for improvement works in and around the village.

I can assure everybody that the Parish Council does its very best to complete tasks as cost effectively as possible and are always on the look-out for additional sources of revenue and last year secured funding for improving Coronation Garden.

As a Parish Council we can consider ourselves fortunate in having Mike Hill as our clerk. Mike often works well over his contracted hours; is ever mindful of the budgetary constraints we face as a small council and has been instrumental in securing additional resources and best value for money. In addition, we rely heavily on his experience and advice to ensure that we fulfill our statutory requirements to the best of our ability.

I would like to end my Annual Report with a few thanks. Firstly, to Paul Marlow, Mike Cavanagh and Sarah Yeowart (our Wiswell social group) who play a major role in organising village events. This often involves thankless hours in the Freemasons over hard earned liquid refreshments plotting and planning future escapades. We now have a separate Community Fund (ring fenced within the Parish Council's bank account) to support our work (but not our drinking).

I would also like to thank Sue Walmsley and Sarah Yeowart for their continued tending of Coronation Garden and the village flower troughs. In October 2023, they also coordinated a village bulb planting event. The fruits of their hard work were seen in terms of a colourful spring display at various locations in the village.

Thanks also to my Parish Council colleagues for all their support and particularly to Councillor Alan Scholfield, his unstinting work in asking Lancashire County Council to improve our roads and his coordination of the Lengthsman's Scheme, are just two of the contributions he makes to our community and finally, thanks to all our residents for their words of encouragement and support.

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