

Minutes of the Meeting of Prees Parish Council  
held on July 15 2024 at Prees Village Hall at 7.15 pm.

Present: Cllrs Mrs S Short; Mrs J Catterall; Mrs B Finch; Mrs L Baer; R Hirons; J Whelan; M Lanham and Dr J Redgate. There was one member of the Public present and also Mrs K Sieloff, clerk to the PC.

**103/24: Public Session.**

The member of the public present asked if the gateway signs on the A49 at the entrance of the village could be strimmed around.

**104/24: Apologies** had been received from Cllrs Mrs R Clutton; Mrs S Jones; M Lanham; D Ladd and P Wynn.

**105/24: Declaration of Interests.** Cllr J Allen declared a non-pecuniary interest in planning application 24/02409/HHE on the Agenda for consultation, as the property abuts his business premises at Holly Farm Nursery.

**106/27: Minutes** of the Parish Council Meeting held on June 17 2024 and circulated previously, were agreed to be a true record. It was proposed by Cllr R Hirons that they be signed and this was seconded by Cllr Mrs B Finch. All were in favour.

**107/24: Actions arising from the Agenda** not included in the Minutes: there were none.

**108/34: Community Policing Matters.**

There was no policing report available.

The Parish Council had been asked to discuss its choice of the three top policing priorities locally and resolved that these were road safety; anit-social behaviour and rural crime. Clerk to pass these on to Whitchurch policing team.

The Parish Cllrs also collaborated to discuss and respond to the Police and Crime Commissioner's Survey 2024, asking for opinions on local policing activity. Clerk to forward.

**109/24: Shropshire Council Report.** Cllr P Wynn had sent his Apology as he was at another meeting. There was no report.

**110/24: Mrs Lucy Roberts, Whitchurch Place Plan officer,** attended. She explained that the purpose of the Place Plans is to record infrastructure priorities in the parishes, and that this information is essential evidence for the Local Development Plan. A new on-line version of the Place Plan makes it much more interactive and useful. The Place Plan records three levels of project. *Strategic* projects such as for education, highways and health provision allow development to happen; *Local* projects are delivered by Shropshire Council but funding from this pot can also support larger projects shared by Parish Councils. can also usually be applied to for funding by Parish Councils and *Neighbourhood* projects are those managed and funded by Parish Councils often using their CIL Neighbourhood Fund allocations. Parish Councils need to keep their records of projects up to date on the Place Plan as this helps Shropshire Council to prioritize funding.

Lucy reported that community projects entered on the Place Plan will be scrutinized and evaluated. She reminded the meeting that realistic, priority projects for which there is proven need are what is required: the Place Plan entries should not constitute a 'wish list.'

A pause has been put on CIL Local applications from Parish Councils, but the PCs have Neighbourhood Fund and projects that are to be paid for with this should be put on the Place Plan. Their presence there may support applications to other funding sources.

Lucy explained that new items can be added to the Place Plan by the use of the on-line form and that she will help with the deletion of any existing but unrequired items.

The Parish Council will decide which items it needs to have on the Place Plan. Cllr J Whelan will lead a group to meet before the next PC meeting and make suggestions for consideration.

The Chair thanked Lucy for attending and further explaining the workings of the Place Plan.

**111/24: Planning matters:**

Current planning applications for consultation.

24/02409/HHE: The Lymes, Whitchurch Road, Prees, Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 2DD.

Proposal: Erection of a single storey rear extension to a detached dwelling. dimensions 8.00 metres beyond the rear wall, 3.45 metres maximum height and 2.20 metres high to eaves

Applicant: Mr & Ms D & L Grocott (co Peter Richards & Co. Limited, Crabtree Farm, Prees Heath, Whitchurch, SY13 3JY)

The Parish Council resolved to support this Application. This was proposed by Cllr J Whelan and seconded by Cllr Mrs B Finch. All were in favour.

#### **Planning Decisions received from Shropshire Council.**

23/04624/FUL: Land To The South Of, Nook Lane, Weston Under Redcastle, Shropshire

Proposal: Erection of a building for private horse riding practice and associated works, to include change of use of land. (Resubmission of Application Ref: 23/00910/FUL) Decision: Refuse

24/01432/FUL: Broadhay, Broadhay Lane, Lower Heath, Prees, Shropshire, SY13 2BJ

Proposal: Conversion and extension of traditional brick barn to provide 2-bedroom dwelling

Decision: Grant Permission.

#### **112/24 Parish and Parish Council Matters**

##### **Whitchurch Road Community-led Build.**

Cllr R Hirons reported that Steve Swann from Wrekin had reported earlier in the month that the legal documents pertaining to the easements necessary for allowing access over Medical Centre land, in order to connect the electricity to the development, had been received. They were with the Medical Centre officials for signing. Morris were back on site from 8 July. A meeting of the Project Board for a full update is expected imminently.

**Access to Notice-boards and post-box in Fauls.** Clerk to enquire about the viability of providing steps and slope for access. Clerk was also asked to check what obligations if any existed on the PC to ensure any modifications to the provision made it fully-accessible to those with disabilities.

**Refurbishment of play areas.** Parish Cllrs were given copies of the quote for the proposed new equipment for the two Parish-Council-owned playgrounds. The equipment comprises a slide; an easy-access roundabout and a multi-user swing for Prees playground and a zipwire for Higher Heath. Modifications to the access to Prees playground to make it more broadly accessible are also included in the total cost (ex VAT) of £51,196.45 which was resolved on. This was proposed by Cllr J Allen and seconded by Cllr Mrs L Baer. All were in favour.

##### **Unreliable local mobile network.**

Cllr Dr J Redgate's reported as follows:

Coverage is poor in parts of the Parish including Higher Heath where signal is insufficient in many households for electricity Smartmeters to function. Signal is poor to both West and East of the Parish, but the situation is improving. There is a new node on Moss Lane in Whixall between the Marina and the Primary School: Vodafone and maybe other networks. O2 signal is much improved there. Vodafone is to be added to the Fauls O2 node. A new major node near Raven Café, Prees has been approved. (Multiple networks.) This should solve the Higher Heath problems.

Emergency calls can be made by any phone to any network, so it is unnecessary for all networks to cover all areas for this purpose.

It appears that not all nodes have battery back-up in the event of power supply failure, the Fauls node being one example where residents have noted complete signal loss when the local supply fails.

Cllr Redgate assured the Meeting he would continue to monitor the situation as it evolves towards copper switch-off in January 2027. He was thanked by the Chair.

##### **Project Gigabit: Roll-out of Full Fibre in North Shropshire.**

Cllr Dr J Redgate provided the following update.

Notices are appearing in the Parish signalling the position of new poles. There are a number of instances where cable routes are not using existing poles or underground ducts, where there is no obvious technical reason why they cannot. Freedom Fibre have been contacted in respect of one case and the response was that they are not allowed to use all existing poles. No reason was given but it is thought that poles carrying power cables are off-

limits perhaps due to safety concerns, even though there are many instances of shared services across the country. It is a shame. Perhaps the hurdle is administrative or commercial, or maybe it's to do with safety or the training of installation personnel?

Freedom Fibre have indicated that their North Shropshire network will use power supplies only for the nineteen cabinets and these are battery-backed and monitored, with generators being brought in should power fail and batteries run out. This and the stated ability of signal re-routing should one hub fail, suggests a robust communication network for the future as long as customers have battery-backed equipment installed in their homes.

**Prees Crossroads.** Cllr Mrs S Short reported that as a result of lots of recent visits to the site she is confident that fewer vehicles are parking on the double yellow lines at the Crossroads. Clerk to circulate again the procedure for reporting offending vehicles online to Shropshire Council Traffic Enforcement. Clerk to deliver remaining Parish Council Notice supporting prohibition of parking on double yellow lines to Cllr Mrs J Catterall who will display it on her house wall.

#### **The Square, Prees.**

The clerk reported that the estate agent handling the potential sale of the property has confirmed that there is a buyer and the sale process is underway. Clerk was asked to advise the estate agent about current vandalism of the properties.

#### **Mis-use of Prees Village Hall car park/ obstruction of charging spaces.**

Cllr Mrs Short reminded the meeting that parking places are being taken up by the apparent long-term 'parking' of non-road-worthy vehicles. She asked that vehicles without road tax should be reported to the DVLA and suggested that Shropshire Council should be asked for painted demarcation of the spaces adjacent to the electric chargers, to discourage use by other vehicles.

**Fabric of Youth Shelter becoming hazardous.** Cllr R Hirons reported that the roof of the Youth Shelter is now very dilapidated and potentially hazardous. The security camera has been badly damaged. The lease on the patch of land that the Shelter stands on runs out in 2028, and the PC has been advised that it will not be renewed. After discussion it was resolved that the clerk should obtain quotes for the demolition of the Youth Shelter. Cllr J Whelan to approach the Cricket and Recreation Club Committee to see if it might be prepared to contribute to the cost of this if early demolition was decided on. Proposed by Cllr J Allen and seconded by Cllr Mrs L Baer. All were in favour. (Cllr J Whelan abstained.)

**Refurbishment of two PC benches.** Clerk had received a quote of £520.00 for the complete refurbishment of the two benches (one by Jackie's Shop; one halfway up Church Street.) It was resolved to accept the quote. Proposed by Cllr Mrs B Finch and seconded by Cllr Mrs L Baer. All were in favour.

**Wrafton Terrace overgrowth:** a permanent solution required? Cllr Mrs S Short reported that the area is badly overgrown again already. This is hazardous for vehicles emerging on to Whitchurch Road. She suggested that complete removal of all the undergrowth, leaving only the Rowan trees, might be the way forward. Cllr J Allen was opposed to the idea of removing the underplanting, putting forward the view that if the underplanting was managed properly, it would not present any problems. Cllr Mrs S Short to talk to the residents of Wrafton Terrace and garner their views.

**Commemorative tree to be planted at Prees Medical Centre.** Cllr Mrs S Short reported that the Prees Medical Centre had agreed to allow the planting of a walnut tree in its lawn to commemorate the life of the deceased son of a local resident. The planting will happen in January 2025. Details of the accompanying ceremony, which may be a military one, to be discussed and decided on.

#### **113/24: SALC.**

Nothing to report. North Shropshire Area Committee Meeting clashed with the PC meeting unfortunately.

#### **114/24: Accounting matters**

##### **Accounts for Payment July 2024**

The late addition of the payment to the internal auditor was noted, and it was proposed by Cllr R Hirons that the following accounts should be paid and this was seconded by Cllr Mrs B Finch. All were in favour.

K D Sieloff salary July 2024	540.14
HMRC PAYE	43.60
K D Sieloff (clerk's expenditure 12.6.24-9.7.24)	34.40
Scottish Power (streetlight energy- 1.6.24-1.7.24)	395.62
Technochip Computers Ltd	170.00
Prees Village Hall (hirings x 3 for April, May, June 2024)	<u>75.00</u>
Total	£ 1,258.76

*Overlooked invoice added:*

Bernard Townson internal auditor	<u>110.00</u>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>£1,368.76</b>

Clerk's expenditure 12.6.24- 9.7.24

*BT line rental contribution July 2024: £ 12.50*

*Petrol: 1 x trip to noticeboards (June Agenda etc) 8 miles @ 45p per mile = £3.60*

*1 x trip to noticeboards (AGAR documents) 8 miles @ 45p per mile = £3.60.*

*1 x return trip to internal auditor: 26 miles @ 45p per mile = 11.70.*

*Stamps: 4 x second class stamps @ 75p = £3.00*

Total = £34.40

### **Progress of Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023-24.**

The clerk reported that all documentation had been sent to the external auditor. Copies of the AGAR documents are on the website and all notice-boards and all supporting documentation is available for public scrutiny on application to the clerk until the end of 8 August 2024 in accordance with requirements.

### **Quarterly Accounting information.**

The Receipts and Payments for the first quarter of 2024-25, together with the Spend Against Budget for the same period and the Bank Reconciliation for the end of June, had been previously circulated and were now perused by the cllrs. Clerk to deliver all supporting information for the quarter's bank reconciliations to Cllr Mrs L Baer the following day, in order for her to check them.

**115/24: Housekeeping.** Cllr J Whelan reminded the meeting that the local road closures necessary to enable connection of electricity to the new housing development in Whitchurch Road would start the following week. It was recognised that the extensive nature of the work would inevitably cause disruption and inconvenience. The PC had endeavoured to help by providing local businesses and organisations with diagrams clearly illustrating the closures and all pertinent information was on the website.

**116/24: Facebook.** A comment on facebook had expressed a hope that a big slide would be provided as part of the enhancement of provision at Prees playground.

**117/24: Correspondence.**

**118/24: Items for next Agenda.**

**119/24: Resolution to exclude Public and Press.**

Proposal: That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. This was proposed by Cllr Mrs S Short and seconded by Cllr J Whelan. All were in favour and the meeting continued in private session.

**120/24 : Confidential item.**

**The meeting was closed at 9.45 pm.**

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