

PRESTON-UNDER-SCAR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 20 May 2025

Present: Councillor Councillors Amsden, Fletcher, Higham, Knights and Sayers
Clerk: Linda Stevens

1. Election of Chairman

Resolved:

That Councillor Amsden be elected Chairman of Preston Under Scar Parish Council for the period to the Council's Annual Meeting in 2026.

2. Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Councillor Amsden signed the prescribed declaration of acceptance of office.

3. Apologies for absence: None

4. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 15 April 2025

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 15 April 2025 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

5. To declare Councillors' interests in items on the agenda: None

6. Action taken since the last meeting

The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council's comments on the application had been submitted to North Yorkshire Council and were available on the Planning Portal, along with a large number of objections submitted to date by residents.

The Council's objections to the development had also been sent to Rishi Sunak MP who had Confirmed that as an MP he was unable to intervene in the planning process. He had however been in contact with North Yorkshire Council and had received an assurance from the Development Service Manager that all representations received would be taken into account as part of the decision-making process. The Parish Council's request for a Committee Site Visit had been noted and would be considered in line with normal Council practice.

Unitary Councillor Sedgwick commented that having looked at the application and comments submitted to date, she was very supportive of the Parish Council and residents' position.

It was noted that Redmire Parish Council and Wensley Parish Meeting were also listed as consultees but, to date, appeared not to have responded.

Resolved:

That the Clerk send a copy of the Parish Council's objections to Redmire Parish Council and Wensley Parish Meeting and seek their views on the application.

7. Finance and Banking

Resolved:

(1) To note that the opening balances as at 1 April 2026 were as follows:

- **Current Account: £4362.35**
- **Savings Account: £2330.49**

(2) To note that the following payments had been authorised by the Clerk under her delegated authority or were contractually required to be made since the meeting of the Parish Council on 25 February 2025:

Payee	Item	Payment Type	Amount
Inst. of Cemetery and Crematorium Management	Clerks attendance on training course	BACS	£228.00
Clerk	Net pay for February	BACS	£273.65
Defib Warehouse	2 pairs of Defib pads	BACS	£148.80
Information Commissioner	Renewal of annual Registration	Direct Debit	£47.00
Yorkshire Local Councils Assoc	Cllr Knights' attendance at Biodiversity Webinar	BACS	£17.60
DCN	Grass Cutting – village and Cemetery in March	BACS	£200.00
Yorkshire Local Councils Assoc	Annual Membership Subscription	BACS	£71.00
Clerk	Net pay for March	BACS	£265.26

Inst of Cemetery and Crematorium Management	Cllr Higham's attendance on Memorial Management Course	BACS	£234.00
HMRC	PAYE for Jan-March	BACS	£191.60
Clerk	Net pay for April	BACS	£259.60
DCN	Grass cutting – Village and Cemetery in April	BACS	£330.00

(3) Parish Council accounts for the year ending 31 March 2025

Councillors were invited to consider, and if satisfied approve, the Parish Council's accounts for the year ending 31 March 2025 and to receive the year end bank reconciliation

The Clerk confirmed that the accounts and the Council's financial records generally had been examined and approved by the internal auditor.

Resolved:

To approve the Parish Council's accounts for the year ending 31 March 2025 and to note the year end bank reconciliation.

(4) Confirmation of Bank Mandates for 2025/26

Resolved:

(1) That Councillors Amsden, Fletcher, Knights, Sayers and Higham continue and authorised signatories for Barclays Bank for 2025/26 and that the Clerk/ Responsible Financial Officer continue to have read only access to the Council's Barclays Account.

(2) That Councillors Fletcher and Knights, and the Clerk continue as authorised signatories for the Parish Council's NS&I account for 2025/26.

(5) Verification of quarterly Bank Reconciliations for 2025/26

Resolved:

That Councillor Fletcher be appointed as the Councillor responsible for verifying the quarterly Bank Reconciliations for 2025/26.

(6) Statement of Internal Control for 2025/26

Councillors were invited to consider and, if satisfied, approve a Statement of Internal Controls for the current financial year which had been prepared having regard to current Financial Regulations.

Resolved:

To approve the draft Statement of Internal Controls 2025/26 as submitted.

(7) Statement of Opening Balances on Reserves at 1 April 2025

Resolved:

To approve the following Opening Balances on the Parish Council's Reserves 2025/26:

Election Reserve: £1000 - retained to help cover the cost of any unforeseen by-election to the PC which the Council would be required to meet in full.

IT/Website Reserve: £300 - A small reserve specifically for IT related purposes is considered prudent, especially given the recent change in the Council's IT arrangements and web host

Defibrillator Fund: £300 - maintained to cover/contribute towards the cost of any unforeseen issues arising with the defibrillator such as the early need for a replacement battery

Cemetery Reserve: £1370 - this is a significant reduction from the level of reserve maintained in 2024/25 but the adjustment enables the General Reserve to be replenished to the level required by current Accounting Standards

General Reserve: £3722.84 this provides a reserve that complies with current Accounting Standards and will be capable of funding the projected deficit at 31.3.25

Total: £6692.84

8. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 (AGAR)

(a) Annual Internal Audit report 2024/25

The internal auditor had completed the Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/2025 which had been circulated to Councillors. His report showed under the main headings that:

- Appropriate accounting records had been kept throughout the financial year

- That the Parish Council had complied with its financial regulations and that payments had been properly approved and supported by invoices
- That the precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process, progress against the budget had been regularly monitored and that reserves were adequate
- That the Parish Council's Website had been up to date at the time of the audit, in accordance with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the Internal Auditor's report.

(b) The Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025

The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer requested Councillors to consider in turn each of the statements 1 – 9 set out in the Annual Governance Statement, which had been circulated with the agenda and to respond either “yes” or “no” in each case. Councillors considered each of the statements in turn and affirmed that in their view the Parish Council had, to the best of their knowledge and belief, met all of the requirements in each case and were therefore able to answer “yes” to each statement, with the exception of statement 9 (Trust Funds) which was not applicable in this Council's case.

Resolved:

To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25, as now completed.

(c) The Accounting Statement 2024/25

The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer formally submitted the Accounting Statement 2024/25, which she had signed and certified presented fairly the Parish Council's financial position. Councillors were requested to consider the Statement, which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting, and if satisfied with the statement resolve to approve it.

Resolved:

To approve the Accounting Statements 2024/25 as submitted by the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

(d) The Explanation of Variances and the Bank Reconciliation

The Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer submitted the above documents which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

Councillors were requested to consider and, if appropriate, resolve to approve these documents.

Resolved:

To approve the Explanation of Variances and the year end bank reconciliation for 2024/25 as submitted.

(e) Certificate of Exemption

Having considered the above sections of the AGAR, the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer invited Councillors to consider and, if satisfied that the Parish Council met all of the criteria, to resolve that the Council was exempt from an external audit and authorise the Chairman and the Clerk to complete the Certificate of Exemption and submit it to the External Auditor.

Resolved:

Being satisfied that the Council met all of the criteria, to authorise the Chairman and the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer to sign the Certificate of Exemption and submit it to the Council's external auditor.

(f) The Proposed Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return

Councillors were requested to determine who would act as the named contact for the purposes of the inspection of the AGAR and the accounting records and otherwise consider and if appropriate resolve to adopt the draft notice which proposed that the dates between which the Council's various documents and records would be available would be Tuesday 3 June to Monday 14 July 2025 inclusive.

Resolved:

That the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer be appointed as the named contact for the purposes of the public inspection period and that the dates between which the public would be able to inspect the relevant documents be set as Tuesday 3 June – Monday 14 July 2025 inclusive.

(Note: The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer confirmed that copies of all relevant documents would be displayed on the village notice board and/or on the Council's website from the relevant date).

9. Issues arising from the Annual Village Meeting

Grass Cutting – Long Lane and the Cemetery Extension

Arising from the discussion at the Annual Village Meeting earlier in the evening, Councillors discussed whether the current level of grass cutting along Light Lane and in the Cemetery

Extension should be maintained or adjusted for the remainder of the year on a trial basis in the interests of supporting the Parish Council's and Village's various Biodiversity initiatives.

Resolved:

That, for the remainder of the current year the Council's Contractor be asked:

- **to cut a single mower width strip along the Light Lane verge from the farm gate to the junction with the C35**
- **to cut the grass in the western half only of the Cemetery Extension**

and that the impact of these changes on biodiversity and habitat be monitored and taken into account for grass cutting arrangements in 2026/27 and beyond

10. Cemetery

Councillor Higham and the Clerk reported on issues arising in relation to various aspects of the management of the Cemetery and the Memorials therein in the light of different training courses they had recently attended.

It was considered that the Council needed to put in place a new overarching policy for the management and maintenance of the Cemetery going forward. The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) had provided Councillor Higham with a copy of their model policy, elements of which were not suitable or relevant to the Council's Cemetery. Councillor Higham suggested that she review this and produce a draft local policy which she and the Clerk would then review before consulting more widely.

Reference was also made to the need to trace and mark out the line of the waterpipe under the Cemetery Extension and whether this was a matter with which Yorkshire Water would be able to assist.

Resolved:

- (1) That Councillor Higham prepare a draft overarching policy for the management and maintenance of the Cemetery in the future and review this in conjunction with the Clerk in the first instance, with a view to it being considered by the Council in due course.**
- (2) That, given that the cost of an annual subscription was only £1, the Council join the ICCM.**
- (3) That the Clerk contact Yorkshire Water to ask for their assistance in identifying and marking out the line of the water pipe underneath the Cemetery Extension.**

11. Mileage Allowance

Councillors considered the desirability of introducing a mileage allowance which would be claimable by Councillors and the Clerk when required to use their private vehicle to enable them to undertake authorised duties on behalf of the Parish Council. It was noted that the current HMRC approved mileage allowance was 45p per mile.

Resolved:

- (1) to introduce a mileage allowance claimable by Councillors and the Clerk when required to use their private vehicle to enable them to undertake authorised duties on behalf of the Parish Council.**
- (2) That the mileage payable be fixed at the current HMRC approved rate of 45p per mile.**
- (3) That Councillor Higham be reimbursed at the above rate for mileage she was required to travel to attend her recent ICCM training course on Memorial Management.**

12. Website – Update

Councillors noted progress in populating the new Council website with content and those pages for which content was outstanding.

It was agreed that the old Parish Council website should be decommissioned no later than the end of June as the Clerk could continue to load new content, as and when it became available.

Councillor Higham volunteered to produce some text for the Cemetery and Village Hall pages and would consult Councillor Fletcher on the latter before forwarding to the Clerk to upload.

13. Delegation of powers to the Parish Clerk and Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972

Councillors were invited to review the current Delegations to the Clerk and ongoing usefulness of the current provisions for remote meetings, authority for which would expire at the end of May 2025, if not renewed.

Resolved:

- 1. That, in order to give the Council flexibility in the discharge of its business and subject to compliance with Paragraphs 7 and 8 of Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972 (which, respectively, require the Council to hold an Annual Meeting and at least three other meetings in every year), all meetings of the Council during the relevant period shall be in-person meetings unless, in relation**

to any meeting, the Clerk, following consultation with Councillors, decides that the meeting shall be a remote meeting.

2. That all meetings of the Council during the relevant period shall be held on such days, at such times and in such places as the Clerk, following consultation with Councillors shall determine.
3. That, during the relevant period, the following powers be delegated to the Clerk:
 - (a) To authorise payment of invoices for work undertaken for, and services provided to, the Council, subject to being satisfied that payment is due in accordance with the invoice details;
 - (b) Following consultation with the Chairman, to do anything expedient or necessary in the interests of the Council or to ensure the continuation of the effective or proper business of the Council, subject to any action taken under these powers being reported to the next available meeting of the Council;
 - (c) To take any decision following any recommendation made by the Councillors at a remote meeting of the Council

Provided that neither of the delegations at (a) and (b) above shall amend, modify or affect the approved signatories required to authorise payment from the Council's bank account.

4. That, for the purposes of Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972:
 - (a) the Council approves, in relation to each and every member of the Council, during the relevant period, attendance at a remote meeting of the Council as a reason for a failure to attend an in-person meeting of the Council;
 - (b) the Clerk be authorised, in relation to any specific member of the Council, to approve a reason for the failure of that member to attend a meeting or meetings of the Council where the failure to attend would not be covered under (a) above.
5. That, for the purposes of 1 to 4 above:

“Chairman” means the Chairman of the Council;

“Clerk” means the Clerk to the Council.

“Meeting” means an in-person meeting or a remote meeting;

“In-person meeting” means a meeting of the Council, or of any committee or sub-committee of the Council, at which Councillors come together in person in the same place and which is held in accordance with Paragraph 10 of Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972;

“Remote meeting” means an informal meeting of the Council, or of any committee or sub-committee of the Council, where Councillors do not come together in person in the same place and which would have complied with the requirements of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus)(Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 were those Regulations, which ceased to have effect on 7 May 2021, still in force;

“Relevant period” means the period from the passing of this Resolution until 31 May 2026 unless earlier terminated or amended by the Council.

14. Planning Applications

New Applications: none received

Upcoming Applications: none notified

Update on previous applications:

ZD25/00087/LBC - listed building consent to replace the existing roof stone slates and flashing to the 20th century outshut to the Manor House Preston Under Scar *(the Parish Council had no objections to this application the outcome of which is awaited)*

NY/2025/0024/ENV Variation of condition No's 1 & 5 of Planning Permission C1/12/00765/CM for Wensley Quarry to allow for working of permitted mineral within Phases 4, 5 and 6 and continuation of mineral extraction and restoration *(the Parish Council objected to this application on a number of grounds and the outcome of the application is awaited)*

15. Date of the next meeting: 10 July 2025 (if there is business)

The meeting closed at 20.20 hrs