



Astley Village Parish Council

Meeting of the Council

8 January 2025 at 6.30pm

Present

Councillor Gillian Sharples (Chair) in the Chair; Councillor John McAndrew (Vice-Chair); Councillors Keith Ashton, Neil Forkin, Matt Lynch, Chris Sheldon and Ian Thomas.

320.01 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Emma Barraclough and Elaine Bibby.

320.02 Declarations of Interest

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interests they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

Councillor John McAndrew declared a Personal Interest as a Governor at Buckshaw Primary School.

320.03 Public Engagement

Members of the public are invited to put questions/make representations to the members of the Parish Council. No issues were raised.

320.04 Borough/County Councillor Reports

Reports from Chorley North and Astley Ward Borough Councillors and County Councillor (Lancashire County Council) (copies of which had been circulated) were considered.

Councillors Alistair Morwood attended the meeting and reported that there was nothing specific to report since the last meeting but they continued to respond to resident's issues and concerns and attend various committees and portfolio meetings.

County Councillor Aidy Riggott attended the meeting and reported that the resurfacing of the roundabout at the junctions with Euxton Lane, Chancery Road and the B5252 had been completed.

It was confirmed that the footpaths within the village adjoining main roads were the responsibility of Lancashire County Council (with the exception of those footpaths managed by Places for People). It was unlikely that these footpaths would be gritted as priority would be given to areas with significant public footfall such as at the Chorley and South Ribble Hospital and within the town centre.

RESOLVED – That the reports be noted.

320.05 Minutes

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 6 November 2024 (copies of which had been circulated) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the deletion of “P K D Precision Steel Metal Ltd” and the substitution of “T B E Precision Steel Metal Ltd” in relation to the Tommy Statues (Minute 319.09).

320.06 Statutory Business

(i) Co-option to the Parish Council Vacancies

The Parish Clerk reported that there had been one expression of interest received from a residents and Members had been provided with details of the applicants and their submissions.

Prior to the meeting, members and candidates had been provided with detailed arrangements of how the co-option procedure would be conducted,

The candidate was then given the opportunity to make a brief presentation prior to members holding an election to fill the vacancies and confirmed that they fulfilled the qualifications for standing for election.

It was then:

RESOLVED – (1) (unanimously) That Mr Neil Forkin be co-opted on to the Parish Council.

Councillors Neil Forkin signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting.

(2) The Parish Clerk be requested to extend the date for expressions of interest in relation to the current vacancy to enable any applications to be considered at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

(3) That Councillor Neil Forkin be appointed as a member of the Village Development Plan Working Group.

(ii) Planning Issues Relevant to the Village

The Parish Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing details of planning issues relevant to the village. The Parish Council had not been consulted on any planning application received by Chorley Borough Council since the last Parish Council Meeting on 6 November 2024.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

320.07 Parish Clerk Report

The Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on ongoing projects, work outstanding and activities since the last meeting of the Parish Council.

In particular, the following issues in the report were discussed:

Proposed Improvements to the Public Realm in Astley Village

The Parish Clerk reported that at the last meeting it was agreed that as part of the current public realm scheme around the shops/ community centre, Chorley Borough Council be requested to remove the existing bollard and replaced with a lockable/ removable bollard to enable a cherry picker to access the site so that the lights can be removed each January, and the tree dressed in December to avoid the lights remaining on the tree. Chorley Borough Council had obtained an estimate to remove the existing bollard and install a new drop-down bollard at a cost of £740.34 + VAT (£888.408).

Proposed Improvements to the Chancery Road Underpass

The Parish Clerk reported that at the last meeting Chorley Borough Council were requested to advise on the process to obtain estimates to carry out the works identified by the Parish Council. The following estimates had been provided by one of Chorley Borough Council's local contractors (Total cost £5,362.22):

- Cut back overgrown vegetation and general clean up - £402.50 + VAT (£483).
- Replace sleeps as most are rotten. - £2,070.12 + VAT (£2,484.14).
- Prep and paint handrails and bike station. - £1,390.90 + VAT (£1,669.08).
- Jet wash and patch paint bins - £605.00 + VAT (£726).

Proposed Planting at the Astley Village Garden of Reflection

The Parish Clerk reported that the Parish Council had previously agreed a planting scheme at the Astley Village Garden of Reflection and requested Chorley Borough Council to provide a specification for the Parish Council to be able to obtain quotes from a Landscaping Contractor to prepare the areas for planting. Chorley Borough Council had suggested that the Parish Council invite small local landscape firms for quotes based on the specification set out in the report and arrange for the work to take place.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the following expenditure approved by the Parish Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 16.2 be noted:

- Chorley Borough Council - Room Hire (Community Centre) £40.00.
- Tesco - Christmas Selection Boxes £340.00.
- Sainsburys - Christmas Refreshments £104.85.
- Printwise - Christmas Printing £100.00.
- Printwise - Winter Newsletter 2024 £680.00.
- Printwise - Councillor Recruitment Leaflet £85.00.
- Tesco - Additional Christmas Selection Boxes £42.30.
- Sue Edwards - Internal Audit 2023/24 £75.00.
- Richard Ryan - Christmas Tree Lights Inspection £100.00.
- Richard Ryan - Additional Christmas Tree Lights £350.00.
- Richard Ryan - PATest and switch on the lights £50.00.

(3) That approval be given to removing the existing bollard and installing a new drop-down bollard at a cost of £740.34 + VAT to be funded from the Improvements to the Village Centre budget (03-2) as part of the Public Realm initiative by Chorley Borough Council and that Chorley Borough Council be requested to include this work within the improvements to the public realm in Astley Village.

(4) That approval be given to the following expenditure and the works being carried out by the local contractors recommended by Chorley Borough Council subject to the Village Development Plan Working Group confirming the works required and the contractor confirming the works can be accommodated within the quotes provided:

- Cut back overgrown vegetation and general clean up - £402.50 + VAT.
- Replace sleeps - £2,070.12 + VAT.
- Prep and paint handrails and bike station - £1,390.90 + VAT.
- Jet was and patch paint bins - £605.00 + VAT.

(5) That the Parish Clerk be requested to invite small local landscape firms to provide quotes based on the specification set out in the report and that the Village Development Plan Working Group be authorised to consider the quotes and authorise the work to proceed within a budget of £2,500.

(6) That the Parish Clerk be requested to make arrangements for a meeting of the Village Development Plan Working Group to take place on Wednesday 5 February 2025 via Zoom.

(7) That the following Parish Councillors be nominated to represent the Parish Council at the presentation and engagement meeting to feed into the proposal and site design on Thursday 9 January 2025 at 4pm at Chorley Town Hall,

320.08 One-Way System/Road Closure on Chancery Road During Large Events

The Parish Clerk reminded the Parish Council at the last meeting of the Parish Council on 6 November 2024 it had been suggested that the one-way system/road closure on Chancery Road during large events held at Astley Park was not working as vehicles were not observing the one-way restrictions and travelling the wrong way along Chancery Road creating serious safety issues. It was noted that at the recent firework event there had only been Marshalls at the entrance to Hallgate which was insufficient as Marshalls were also required at both ends of Chancery Road. It had been agreed to review of the one-way system/road closure on Chancery Road during large events at this meeting of the Parish Council.

It was reported that Nikki Burrough, Events Manager at Chorley Borough Council had provided the following response:

“Thank you for your email regarding the one-way system on Chancery Road. We are aware there were some issues with parking during the recent Bonfire Event and as always are open to suggestions of how to improve.

In regard to the bonfire event, we had three marshals across the road closure:

- One at either end of the way system – these were provided by a traffic management company we contract for this road closure.
- One on the junction of Hall gate and Chancery Road.

We have received an email from a resident stating that there was only one marshal on Chancery Road, so I believe the marshals took short a break during the event. I am looking into the option of training Chorley Council staff to manage this road closure for future events. We will also look to enhance our communication to event attendees prior to events to make them aware of the one-way system.

While we are aware that there are issues with the one-way system, we only received one complaint from a resident this year regarding inconsiderate during the bonfire event which I believe shows that this method, although not perfect, is working as intended. If the one-way system was removed, I think this would cause many more issues for residents of Astley Village. The leader is happy for us to continue to implement the one-way system for our Astley Park event to reduce the impact on residents.”

RESOLVED – That the Parish Clerk be requested to write to the leader of Chorley Council regarding the current unsatisfactory arrangements regarding the one-way system/road closure on Chancery Road during large events held at Astley Park as vehicles were not observing the one-way restrictions and travelling the wrong way along Chancery Road creating serious safety issues and that the Parish Council were unable to support the current arrangements unless as a minimum the number of marshals was increased.

320.09 Financial Matters

(i) Financial Position

The Responsible Financial Officer submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) showing the financial position as at 17 December 2024.

RESOLVED – That the financial position be noted.

(ii) Payments to be Approved

The Responsible Financial Officer submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) recommending a list of invoices to be paid between 1 January 2025 and 28 February 2025 as follows:

Date	Creditor	Description	Total (£)	Vat (£)	Net (£)
10/01/25	Employee 4	Reimbursements (November 2024)	101.66		101.66
10/01/25	Employee 4	Reimbursements (December 2024)	65.00		65.00
01/01/25	Easy Web Sites	Monthly rental	72.60	12.10	60.50
23/01/25	Zoom	Zoom Subscription (January 2025)	15.59	2.60	12.99
15/01/25	Employee 4	Salary (Jan 2025) Including Backpay	542.40		542.40
15/01/25	HMRC	Tax (January 2025)	135.60		135.60
01/02/25	Easy Web Sites	Monthly rental	72.60	12.10	60.50
23/02/25	Zoom	Zoom Subscription (February 2025)	15.59	2.60	12.99
15/02/25	Employee 4	Salary (February 2025)	406.30		406.30
13/02/25	HMRC	Tax (February 2025)	101.60		101.60
			1,528.94	29.40	1,499.54

RESOLVED – That approval be given to the payments as detailed above.

(iii) Spend Against Budget Headings

The Responsible Financial Officer submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) inviting the Parish Council to review the spend against budget headings.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

(iv) To consider a report of the Responsible Financial Officer proposing the 2024/25 budget headings and Precept.

The Parish Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) to assist the Parish Council in finalising the Budget for 2024/25.

It was reported that the 2025/26 Tax Base approved by Chorley Borough Council for Astley Village was 921.86 (1,421 properties).

The Village Development Plan Working Group had met on 11 December 2024 and made recommendations in relation to the Village Development Plan and make recommendations in respect of the Budget for 2025/26. The Personnel Committee met on 20 November 2024 and made recommendations in respect of the Budget for 2025/26. These recommendations were detailed in the report.

RESOLVED (Unanimously) – (1) That the Astley Village Parish Precept for 2025/26 be set at £24,155 (Parish Yield: £20,278 and Parish Top-up Grant: £3,877) with the Band D amount being £22 (the same as 2024/25).

(2) That the updated Village Development Plan be approved including the following new schemes:

- Four Additional Finger Post Signs around the Village and allocating a budget of £5,000.
- Making a bid to the Neighbourhood Priority Scheme for 2025/26 to upgrade the Path from Chancery Road, through Dam Head Wood to Astley Park and allocating a contribution of £2,500.00 should the bid be successful.

(3) That the Paris Clerk, in consultation with the Ward Borough Councillors be requested to make a bid on behalf of the Parish Council to the Neighbourhood Priority Scheme for 2025/26 to upgrade the Path from Chancery Road, through Dam Head Wood to Astley Park

(4) That the following 2025/26 budget be approved subject to further consideration and review at the end of the financial year:

Budget Heading		Budget Sub-Heading	Total Budget (£)
01 - ADMINISTRATION	01-1	Room Hire/ Zoom Subscription	400.00
	01-2	Office/Sundry (including new Laptop)	1,500.00
	01-3	Insurance	550.00
	01-4	Auditors/Accounts	400.00
	01-5	Election/By-Election/Polls	7,000.00
	01-6	Employee Costs (Salary, Training etc.)	7,000.00
	01-7	Employee Contingency	1,000.00
	01-8	IT/Website	1,000.00
02 - COUNCIL	02-1	Newsletter/Publications	1,900.00
	02-2	Village Caretaker	-
	02-3	Councillor Training	500.00
	02-4	Grant Awards/Local Projects and Groups	2,500.00
03 - VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN	03-1	Christmas Tree Lights/ Christmas Event	1000.00
	03-2	Improvements to the Village Centre (including additional Seating) as part of the Public Realm initiative by Chorley Borough Council	5,750.00
	03-3	Contribution Towards Upgrading the Path from Chancery Road, through Dam Head Wood to Astley Park as part of a Neighbourhood Priority Scheme	2,500.00
	03-4	Planter Scheme (including maintenance)	1000.00
	03-5	Tree Planting and Maintenance	500.00
	03-6	Wildflower Meadows/Corridors	250.00
	03-7	West Way Nature Reserve maintenance/future improvements	500.00
	03-8	Astley Village Community Garden of Reflection	2,000.00
	03-9	Chancery Road Underpass Improvements	10,000.00
	03-10	Refurbishment of existing Gateway Signs	500.00
	03-11	Road Safety (Maintenance of SPIDs)	500.00
	03-12	Four Additional Finger Post Signs around the Village	5,000.00
	03-13	Paths to provide access from Great Meadow to the play area at West Way Sports Hub	15,000.00
	03-14	Improving Community Engagement and Raising the Profile of the Parish Council (including updating the Village map board)	5,000.00
04 - GENERAL RESERVE	04	General Reserve	20,000.00
Expected Balance Carried Forward from 2024/25	£68,500		
TOTALS			93,250.00

(v) To review the Review Asset Register

The Parish Clerk submitted the updated Asset Register (copies of which had been circulated).

RESOLVED – That the Asset Register be approved subject to the number of “Unknown Tommy Statues” being increased to two at a total cost of £500,

(vi) To appoint Internal Auditor for the 2024/25 Accounts.

RESOLVED – That Ms Susan Edwards be appointed as Internal Auditor in respect of the 2024/25 Accounts at a cost not exceeding £100.

320.10 Spring Newsletter 2025

The Parish Council discussed the timing and potential articles for the Spring edition of the Parish Council Newsletter and the following articles were suggested:

- Annual Report (Councillor Gillian Sharples).
- New Councillor Introductions (Councillors Elaine Bibby and Neil Forkin).
- Christmas Event 2024 (Councillor Emma Barraclough).
- Chorley Flower Show 2025 (Councillor Emma Barraclough).
- Promoting the Monthly Litter Picks (Councillor Keith Ashton).
- Replacement of the Existing Litter Bins Outside Buckshaw Primary School and at the Shops at Hallgate with Recycling Litter Bins ((Councillor Keith Ashton).
- New schemes included in the Village Development Plan (Councillor Chris Sheldon).
- Proposed Improvements to the Chancery Road Underpass (Councillor Chris Sheldon).
- Proposed Planting at the Astley Village Garden of Reflection (Councillor John McAndrew).
- An article provided by Buckshaw Primary School (Councillor John McAndrew/ School).
- An interview with residents from the Sheltered Housing Accommodation regarding living in the Parish and the public transport provision.
- Improvements to the Public Realm in Astley Village (Chorley Borough Council).

RESOLVED (1) That the following timetable for the production of the Spring edition of the Parish Council Newsletter be agreed:

- Parish Councillors email the Parish Clerk with suggested articles for inclusion in the Spring Newsletter by Wednesday 5 March 2025 and those articles be submitted to by Sunday 6 April 2025.
- All articles be sent to the Printers by Monday 14 April 2025.
- Deadline for Councillors to comment on the proof – Wednesday 7 May 2025.
- Newsletter delivered from Wednesday 23 May 2025.

(2) That Parish Councillors be requested to suggest potential articles to the Parish Clerk in advance of the next Parish Council Meeting on 5 March 2025.

(3) That the Parish Clerk be requested to investigate purchasing a licence for the Microsoft Copilot Software.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

320.11 Christmas Event 2024

The Parish Christmas reviewed the Carol Singing Event which had been held on Friday 6 December 2024. Unfortunately, due to the inclement weather the attendance had been lower than in previous years. The Christmas Tree lights had been switched on by Parish Councillors and refreshments had been served following the event in the Community Centre.

The Parish Council discussed the arrangements for the future Installation of the Christmas Tree Lights on the living Christmas Tree.

RESOLVED – (1) That the 2025 Christmas event be held on Friday 5 December 2025 at 6.30 pm following the same format as the 2024 event.

(2) That the Parish Clerk be requested to book the Community Centre from 4:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

(3) That the Parish Clerk be requested to investigate the possibility of a singing group attending the event to accompany the carols.

(4) That Richard Ryan be requested to provide the cost to:

- Arrange for the Christmas Tree pruned/shaped and if necessary, extend the existing fencing at the base of the tree.
- Once the existing bollard is replaced with a new drop-down bollard, access the site via a cherry picker so that the existing lights can be removed to avoid the lights remaining on the tree and in November each year dress the tree and if necessary, add fresh lights to match existing style and type.
- PATest the lights annually prior to the Parish Council Carol Singing Event and switch on the lights on at the Carol Singing Event

320.12 Reports from Parish Council representatives on Other Bodies

Chorley Liaison

The next Meeting would be held on 22 January 2025 at 6.30pm. The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2024 were circulated for information.

Neighbourhood Area Meeting (NW Parishes and Chorley North)

The next meeting would be held on Monday, 24 February 2025 at 6.30pm.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

320.13 Minutes of the Personnel Committee

The minutes of the Personnel Committee held on Wednesday 20 November 2024 were circulated for information.

It was reported that Chorley Borough Council had agreed to facilitate a training/ briefing session on Social Prescribing and Safeguarding/ Prevent through the Chorley Liaison during 2025.

RESOLVED – (1) That the minutes be noted.

(2) That Chorley Borough Council be requested to ensure that when a training/ briefing session on Social Prescribing and Safeguarding/ Prevent takes place, all Parish Councillors can access the meeting online.

(3) That the recommendation to amend the Scheme of Delegation and the Terms of Reference of the Personnel Committee be considered at the Annual Council Meeting on 7 May 2025.

320.14 Correspondence

Correspondence received had been reported as part of the 'Parish Clerk Report' (Minute 320.07).

320.15 Date of Next Meeting

To note that the next meeting of the Parish Council will take place on Wednesday 5 March 2025 at the rise of the Parish Meeting.

The meeting concluded at 8.15 pm.

Chair