

Minutes of Parish Councils' Liaison Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 29 January 2015 starting at 6,30pm
Present: P Young (Chairman)

Councillors:

P Ainsworth	I Sayers
I Brown	G Scott
R Hargreaves	R Swarbrick
R Newmark	N C Walsh
C Ross	

Parish Representatives:

B Redhead	Clayton-le-Dale
A Schofield	Clayton-le-Dale
R Whittaker	Newton-in-Bowland
A Ormand	Ribchester
J Shorter	Sabden
A Haworth	Sabden
H D Parker	Waddington
A Bristol	West Bradford
J Bremner	Wilpshire
T Gaffney	Wilpshire
M Robinson	Wiswell

In attendance: Chief Executive, Head of Engineering Services.

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APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of the following Borough Councillor:

L Rimmer

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of the following Parish Representatives:

A Carr	Bowland Forest Higher Division
A Yearing	Clitheroe
R Assheton	Downham
T Hoyle	Dinckley
P Entwistle	Grindleton
S Rawsthorne	Newsolme and Paythorne
A Steer	Osbaldeston
A Davies	Read
E Law-Riding	Ribchester
G Malloy	Simonstone
D Peat	Simonstone
K Jackson	Waddington
J Brown	Whalley

569 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

570 EVENTS ON THE HIGHWAY

The Head of Engineering Services presented a report which informed Members of the intended withdrawal of police support in providing traffic management for certain events that are staged or encroach upon the public highway. The report also advised Members of the subsequent intended development by Lancashire County Council of a policy for the management of such events.

He reminded Members that it had long been the established practice of the police to provide the necessary traffic management support for numerous charity and community type events, such as parades, village fetes, civic processions and local celebrations. The police had previously undertaken this work without charge.

Lancashire Constabulary had however recently adopted the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) National Guidance which meant that the police do not undertake any traffic management for an event on the highway other than those events that are deemed by the police to be of national importance such as Remembrance Day parades. This meant that event organisers would from here on be responsible for the provision of appropriate traffic management measures that would enable their event to be undertaken in a safe and proper manner.

It was also the intention of the Lancashire County Council as the highways authority to produce a policy that defined the respective responsibilities of parties involved in the staging of this type of event and to provide a set of procedures which collectively would lead to the delivery of events in a safe and proper manner.

There were two potential options which event organisers could provide safe and proper traffic management to support these events. Method 1 where traffic was briefly halted behind a procession that walks or travels on the highway or traffic is guided round it. Method 2 where temporary or full closure utilising traffic signage.

The Chief Executive pointed out that Ribble Valley Borough Council would facilitate wherever possible with this legal requirement by producing road closures under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847. The Head of Engineering Services also offered full advice and guidance for any village events which were unclear on what the new guidance meant. He suggested that event organisers complete an event form which would then be submitted to and commented on by the Safety Advisory Group which included the Police and the Lancashire County Council Highways Authority.

Members voiced their concerns in relation to these new requirements and in particular to the police's withdrawal of support and their inflexibility in helping with training marshals.

RESOLVED: That the Chief Executive write to the undermentioned organisations objecting to these new requirements and pointing out the practical difficulties these new rules place on small rural communities:

Police and Crime Commissioner
Chief Constable of Lancashire
Chief Executive of Lancashire County Council
Nigel Evans MP

571 STEVE MORGAN – LANCASHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The Chairman introduce Steve Morgan who was Community Protection Manager for Blackburn with Darwen, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley. He referred to recent changes in the way Lancashire Fire and Rescue Services worked, in particular in relation to home fire safety checks and pointed out the improved targeting of this service, in particular targeting over 65s, the vulnerable and isolated people.

He also referred to Springboard which was a collaborative operation done in partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Group and Age UK. The operation would target the whole of East Lancashire (excluding Longridge) and would focus on over 65s and targeted home fire safety checks to those most at risk. A “Supporting You” proposal would be developed for potential clients to complete in relation to their own circumstances.

Members asked a number of questions in relation to how the scheme would work in practice.

RESOLVED: That Steve Morgan be thanked for his informative presentation.

572 PARISH POLLS

The Chief Executive informed Committee of a consultation document on the modernisation of Parish Polls with the aim of bringing the process up to date, which would also make the process more transparent.

He informed Members that this consultation was in relation to Parish Polls which arose out of Parish meetings called on a particular topic. This was where parishes may have an important issue to discuss at a Parish meeting. At the present time the arrangements for such Parish Polls were rather outmoded and needed some tightening up in the following three areas:

- Trigger – at present it only requires one third (or 10 whichever is the lower) of those in attendance at a Parish meeting to trigger a poll. This had resulted in cases in which a smaller number of people could demand polls to take place to pursue their own personal agenda.
- Where polls take place there is no provision to use postal or proxy voting and ballots would only open between 4-9pm.
- In addition the rules around what matters could be the subject of a poll were widely drawn with the result that polls could potentially be called on questions not strictly within the remit of Parish Councils.

The proposed changes were as follows:

- To increase the trigger for the number of electors needed to call a poll to limit vexatious unnecessary or otherwise inappropriate use of the trigger. This would be half of those present at a Parish meeting, the number of which should constitute at least 60 voters or 10% of the number of voters, whichever is the greater.
- Update the voting arrangements to improve access and modernise the polling procedure to bring mechanisms in line with other local government polls including polls being available from 7am to 10pm and voting being accessible for postal and proxy voting.
- More closely define the question on which a Parish poll could be held to enable questions which were appropriate to local issues.

The report pointed out that in view of the deadline for this consultation being 30 January, a suggested response had been prepared by the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree to the suggested response on this consultation document as now set out in the report; this be sent to the Department of Communities and Local Government.

573 MATTERS BROUGHT FORWARD BY PARISH COUNCILS

The Chief Executive sought Parish views on giving more publicity to the forthcoming Parish elections, in particular with a view to encouraging a greater number of candidates. He suggested that a poster or leaflet could be developed by his staff to help explain the requirements for becoming a Parish Councillor, what the qualifications to become one were, and how easy it was to become a candidate. The aim was to encourage more candidates to submit their names as candidates in the forthcoming elections.

RESOLVED: That Parishes support the Chief Executive's suggestion on improving information and publicity on Parish Council elections to encourage more candidates.

574 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman announced that the next meeting of this Committee would be held on Thursday, 28 March 2015.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Colin Hirst (414503).