

Minutes of Parish Councils' Liaison Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 27 October 2016, starting at 6.30pm
Present: D Peat (Chairman)

Councillors:

P Ainsworth	I Sayers
A Brown	G Scott
L Graves	D Smith
T Hill	N C Walsh
M Robinson	

Parish Representatives:

S McGregor	Barrow
T Austin	Billington & Langho
H Fortune	Bolton by Bowland, Gisburn Forest & Sawley
K Winstanley	Bowland Forest (Higher)
H Douglas	Chatburn
K Hilton	Grindleton
I Forrester	Hothersall
R Beacham	Longridge
S Rosthorn	Newsholme & Paythorne
R Whittaker	Rimington & Middop
J Shorter	Sabden
R Hirst	Simonstone
K Hodson	Slaidburn & Easington
P Hallett	Thornley-with-Wheatley
J Hilton	Waddington
HD Parker	Waddington
T Parry	West Bradford
M Highton	Whalley
J Bremner	Wilpshire
R Thompson	Wiswell

In attendance: Chief Executive and Head of Regeneration and Housing.

Also in attendance: Sue Sinclair of Hyndburn Homewise.

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APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Borough Councillor D Taylor and from the following Parish Representatives:

D Bland	Aighton Bailey & Chaigley
M Walsh	Bolton-by-Bowland
E Miller	Bowland Forest Lower
P Brown	Chipping
B Green	Chipping
A Schofield	Clayton-le-Dale

M Fenton	Clitheroe
P Robinson	Clitheroe
D Waters	Gisburn
J Parry	Hothersall
M Everett	Longridge
A Steer	Osbaldeston
P Young	Ramsgreave
E Law-Riding	Ribchester
A Ormand	Ribchester
T Haworth	Sabden
G Meloy	Simonstone
J Brown	Whalley

364 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

365 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest.

366 MATTERS ARISING

a) Minute 239

The Chief Executive reported on the Local Government Boundary Commission review of the Parliamentary Constituencies and a letter which he had circulated to Parish Clerks. The proposal was for the reduction of the number of MP's from 650 to 600. The size of the current Ribble Valley constituency of approximately 75,000 electorate fell within the parameters for the new constituency numbers, but the review had proposed division of the constituency in two. Part would be in a new Clitheroe and Colne Constituency, comprising the southern parts of Ribble Valley, parts of Pendle (but not Nelson) and parts of South Ribble. The northern parts of the Ribble Valley would form part a geographically large North Lancashire Constituency, together with parts of Lancaster, Wyre and Preston.

The Policy and Finance Committee of Ribble Valley Borough Council had proposed that a different solution comprising the current Ribble Valley Borough Council area together with wards from the west of Hyndburn should be submitted. There was discussion about the loss of the strength of community in the Ribble Valley and the difficulties in access to the Constituency MP for the proposed North Lancaster Constituency.

RESOLVED: That Parish Council Liaison Committee respond to the review, rejecting the proposal of the Parliamentary Boundary Commission, emphasising the cohesion of the people of the Ribble Valley, the parished nature of the borough and the difficulties that would arise for Ribble Valley as a democratic and political unit if the borough was split between 2 constituencies.

b) Minute 240

The Head of Regeneration and Housing reported that he was working with the Partnership Officers to get feedback on the impact of closure of Lancashire County Council facilities. They will be contacting parishes in this respect and the contemplated Working Group had not been set up yet.

c) Minute 241

It was reported that no suggestions had been received for topics for a presentation at a reception for Parish Chairs and Representatives. Possible subjects were proposed, being advice on local government finances and parish precepts, and a presentation on the Little Green Bus service.

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HYNDBURN HOMEWISE

The Chair introduced Sue Sinclair of Hyndburn Homewise, who gave a presentation on their service and distributed materials on the services which they can offer.

They are a non-profit making organisation registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Society Act 2014, offering a range of services to the whole community on all aspects of home improvement, adaptations, repairs and maintenance with special assistance for older and disabled people. They were able to assist in preparation of projects, selection of tradesmen, sourcing funding and providing support during the work and before payment was made. They contributed to the Integrated Home Improvement Service, to facilitate discharge from hospital and try to minimise need for residential care.

Further services included security measures, energy and cost saving, falls and accident prevention and minor repairs through their subsidised handy person service. They also have a large stock of aids for the disabled and elderly and were able to accept such items (subject to storage space) and refurbish them for reuse.

Advice and support in enabling people to remain in their own homes had saved many millions of pounds of public funds.

She explained that the service was open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm and had a website which would be recommissioned in the near future. The organisation was proposing to drop "Hyndburn" from their title, which would emphasise the availability of services to Ribble Valley residents.

Sue responded to questions and explained that they cover rural areas themselves or with their partners. Access to the service is not means tested, although funding for some work may require assessment or proof of entitlement

to benefits. She would be happy to give a presentation to individual Parish Councils.

RESOLVED: That Sue be thanked for a very informative presentation, which could be circulated to Parish Clerks.

368 BT TELEPHONE BOX CLOSURES – CONSULTATION PROCEDURES

The Director of Community Services submitted a report on the proposal for closure of 50 public telephone boxes in the Ribble Valley, which had been distributed to Parish Clerks for consultation. Responses were sought to be submitted to the Planning Department by 30 November 2016, as part of the local consultation process, to enable formal response to the BT Consultation by 14 January 2017.

There was discussion on the issues that could arise if the programme proceeded and concerns were expressed at the data provided. There was consideration of the poor or non-existent mobile reception in various parts of the Ribble Valley. Members reported concern at the number of boxes that have been out of action, which would have been reflected in low usage. Questions were raised as to whether records were kept of incoming or reverse charge calls.

It was noted that objections on communication grounds were generally accepted by British Telecom, and that evidence in this respect should be collated.

RESOLVED: That a Working Group be set up to propose a response from the Parish Council Liaison Committee, in addition to the responses encouraged from individual Parish Councils.

369 COMMUNITY SAFETY SURVEY FEEDBACK

The Head of Regeneration and Housing reported on the outcome of the recent Community Safety Survey, the first since 2010. The results would be circulated, but highlights had been that people in Ribble Valley generally felt safe, especially in the home; the main safety concerns were speeding vehicles and overgrown hedges; there was a concern about inadequate Police presence. The underlying theme was that Ribble Valley continues to be a generally safe area, but work would be done to promote home security measures, a safer driver programme for young drivers, and focus on issues behind anti-social behaviour in some areas.

Members expressed concern that the low records of crime may reflect the lower Police presence and there was a suggestion that Police Community Support Officers or Community Police attendance could now be available to the villages through public transport and not through Police vehicles.

370 LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

The Head of Regeneration and Housing reported that the consultation had now closed. There had been nearly 120 responses, mostly from agents and landowners seeking to promote sites. These would be reviewed and there would be a further report to the meeting in January 2017.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT TECHNICAL GROUP – PROPOSAL WITH REGARD TO PRECEPT INCREASES

The Chief Executive reported that previously capping of local tax increases had not applied to Parish and Town Councils. A proposal had now been received for consideration whether the 2% cap should apply to the precept for larger Parish and Town Councils (where the precept exceeds £500,000). This contemplated referendum principles for those authorities on any additional increase to the precept. This did not apply to any Parish or Town Council in the Ribble Valley, but if the referendum principle were to be extended to all local precepting authorities, this would be very expensive and potentially unworkable for Parish and Town Councils in the Ribble Valley.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve a response by the Chief Executive, agreeing with the principle for larger precepting authorities, but rejecting the idea of capping for small precepting authorities; that the financial definition of a larger authority be index linked; and that there should be no reduction in the figure by which a larger authority should be defined.

The meeting closed at 8.13pm.

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