

ECCLESTON PARISH COUNCIL

MEETING: Council Meeting, Thursday 10 October 2024, 7.30 pm.

VENUE: Eccleston Community Hub, Drapers Avenue, Eccleston.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies.

2. Declarations of Interests

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal or pecuniary interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda, or brought up at any point in this meeting, in accordance with the adopted Code of Conduct.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 September 2024

To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting distributed to Councillors.

4. Public Participation

The meeting will be adjourned.

Members of the public may raise issues with the Council. No legal decisions may be taken.

5. Planning Matters

To consider planning applications.

Application	Proposed Development	Location
24/00779/FULHH	Single storey extension to side and rear	9 Lawrence Lane
24/00780/TPO	Application for works to protected trees - Chorley BC TPO3 (Eccleston) 2022: Oaks 32T, 33T, 34T and Oak within 16G - Crown raise	Land at Tincklers Lane Tincklers Lane
24/00811/FUL	Section 73 application to vary condition 3 (approved plans) of planning permission ref. 22/00210/FUL (Demolition of existing buildings and erection of three detached dwellings with associated works and landscaping) to add phasing and existing floor plans	Wright's Garden Centre New Lane Nurseries New Lane

6. Financial Matters

i) To receive the finance update.

ii) To consider a request from St Agnes Church for a contribution towards the acquisition of a public access defibrillator.

iii) To consider requests for payment made to the Council.

7. Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

To note the report of the External Auditor.

8. Internal Audit

i) To review the effectiveness of the internal audit.

ii) To consider the appointment of an Internal Auditor.

9. Polling Place Review

To confirm arrangements.

10. Remembrance Parade

To confirm arrangements.

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11. Clerk's Report
To note the Clerk's report.
12. Reports from Outside Bodies (for information only)
To receive reports.
13. Date of Next Meeting
To confirm the date of the next meeting.

Adam Platt

CLERK

Published: 04/10/2024

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of Meeting held on 12 September 2024
4. Public Participation

5. Planning

Permissions

Application	Proposed Development	Location
24/00485/FUL	External alterations at the rear to provide a new timber framed external shelter, the addition of new timber construction external fixed seating, the addition of new festoon lighting and timber support posts, and the re-lining of the existing car park area to provide sixteen car parking spaces	Brown Cow Inn The Green
24/00563/FULHH	Detached garage and conversion of existing integral garage to habitable accommodation	6 Lawrence Close

Refusals: None

Withdrawn: None

6. Finance

- i) Councillors will receive the monitoring statement.
- ii) A request for assistance from St Agnes Church, towards the acquisition of a public access defibrillator will be considered (details of request below):

I was recently asked by St Agnes Parish Pastoral Council, of which I am a member, to submit an application to the British Heart Foundation for assistance towards providing a defibrillator to be available to members of the public, and ambulances, as well as the congregation of St Agnes and users of the church hall. It will be positioned in a locked and heated cabinet in the church car park, near to the hall, and visible from the main road.

Although I thought we had a very strong case, partly due to the age profile and health of the congregation and members of the public using the hall, our application proved unsuccessful.

The Church Council was unanimously committed to providing this life saving equipment and resolved to ask the fund-raising subcommittee to consider this its prime objective this year. My research indicates a cost of around £2000 would pay for its purchase and installation.

The group has responded enthusiastically and has already planned its first event - a fundraising "Defib Dinner Dance" for 5 October.

Since then, I have been made aware of the help given in the past to similar important projects by the both the Parish Council and Lancashire County Council and was hoping that you might petition both organisations on our behalf for any assistance they might give to our fundraising.

- iii) Requests for payment will be approved.

7. Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

The report of the External Auditor (enclosed) will be noted. Details of the completion of the audit, as provided by the External Auditor, were forwarded to Councillors on 19 September.

8. Internal Audit Review

Councillors will review the effectiveness of the internal audit (documentation enclosed). Councillors are requested to satisfy themselves that the scope of the document is adequate and are invited to suggest additions or amendments as appropriate.

Guidance for internal audit and the appointment of an internal auditor can be found in Sections 4.1 - 4.21 (pages 24 - 27) of the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners' Guide (March 2024).

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/our-work/jpag/4040-practitioners-guide-2024/file>

Councillors will also review the requirements detailed on the Internal Auditor Testing document (enclosed). Again, Councillors are requested to satisfy themselves that the scope of the document is adequate and are invited to suggest amendments as appropriate.

Councillors will discuss the appointment of an Internal Auditor for the year ending 31 March 2025 (the current Internal Auditor, Mrs Amanda Partington, has confirmed her willingness to carry out the audit). A fee for the internal audit for the year ended 31 March 2025 will be confirmed. A fee of £110 was agreed in 2019.

9. Polling Place Review

A response to Chorley Council consultation will be considered (details below):

As part of a 5 yearly review, Chorley Council has launched a public consultation with organisations representing groups of residents in Chorley that might find it difficult, for whatever reason, to vote at a polling station.

This would include (but not limited to) those people who -

- struggle with their mobility,
- have hearing or sight loss,
- require extra support,
- may feel going into a polling station intimidating or confusing,
- would prefer to have their photo identity to be confirmed in public for religious or health reasons,
- or someone who needs just a little bit of help.

Anyone eligible to vote at an election, should be able to vote at a polling station if they wished to do so, without being restricted, distressed, or made to feel singled out.

Suggestions for improvements and alternative venues for polling stations which might be more suitable and inclusive for everyone are welcomed.

More information about the review can be found on the council website by clicking:

<https://chorley.gov.uk/elections-voting/polling-district-review>

10. Remembrance Parade

The Parade will assemble at Eccleston Primary School at 10:15am on Sunday 10 November 2024 for a 10:25am start and walk to the Church for a short service at the War Memorial, which will be followed by the Service of Remembrance.

11. Clerk's Report

2025-26 Precept - Councillors will be invited to provide initial suggestions for any specific major items for inclusion in the precept. This is to allow estimated costings to be obtained in time for production of draft budgets for the December meeting prior to the setting of the Precept at the January meeting. Councillors will also be able to provide suggestions after the meeting, in time for production of the December agenda.

12. Reports from Outside Bodies (for information only)

Councillors will provide reports from any outside bodies attended as a representative of the parish council.

13. Date of Next meeting

Thursday 14 November 2024.

(cont.)

Forthcoming Events

Meetings usually begin at 6:30pm at Chorley Town Hall. Confirmation will be sent as and when received.

Chorley Liaison - Wednesday 16 October 2024

Wednesday 22 January 2025

Wednesday 19 March 2025

Western Parishes Neighbourhood Area meeting - Monday 17 March 2025

Lancashire Parish and Town Council Conference - 9:30am, Saturday 2 November 2024 in The Exchange, County Hall, Preston

Lancashire Association of Local Councils AGM - 1:30pm, Saturday 2 November 2024 in The Exchange, County Hall, Preston

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MINUTES of the Meeting held 12 September 2024 at 7.30 pm in The Community Hub, Drapers Avenue, Ecclestone.

Present: Councillors M Miller (Chairman), R Bland, S Bland, M Brown, D Graham, D Miller, H Thomas A Whittaker and O Williams.

Also present: 3 Members of the Public.

97.24 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs D Bonney, C Heath and A Marsh.

98.24 Declarations of Interests

None declared.

99.24 Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 August 2024

Resolved: the minutes of the meeting (as circulated) were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

100.24 Public Participation

A resident mentioned a tree on Drapers Avenue was causing problems, including blocking daylight.

101.24 Planning Matters

24/00695/LUED Certificate of Lawfulness Development (existing) for the Agricultural Building, Hardstanding and Access Track at Land South West of Glendale, Tincklers Lane

24/00672/TPO Application for works to protected trees - Chorley BC TPO 6 (Ecclestone) 2000: 30% Whole Crown reduction to 3No. Silver Birch at 1 Anchorfields

There were no objections to these applications.

102.24 Financial Matters.

i) The financial monitoring statement was considered.

Resolved: the monitoring statement was received and accepted and signed by the Chairman.

ii) Resolved: the following payments were approved:

£ 2.31	Everflow	Water/wastewater (Changing Rooms)
£ 48.66	British Gas	Electricity (Hub)
£ 24.33	British Gas	Electricity (Changing Rooms)
£ 30.36	Easy Websites	Website
£ 30.36	Vodafone	Broadband (Hub)
£ 560.34	Lancashire County Council	Cleaning (Hub) July, August, September
£ 3238.98	Staff costs	Salaries, deductions and reimbursements
£ 19.00	Chorley Council	Business rates (Changing Rooms)
£ 77.67	British Gas	Electricity (Hub)
£ 241.39	British Gas	Gas (Hub)
£ 82.36	British Gas	Electricity (Changing Rooms)
£ 43.36	British Gas	Gas (Changing Rooms)

103.24 Public Consultation on Statement of Community Involvement 2024

Councillors considered a Chorley Council document setting out procedures and standards which will be followed when undertaking consultation with sectors of the community. Councillors had no comments.

104.24 Investment Strategy

A draft investment strategy was presented and Councillors were invited to provide suggestions and/or amendments prior to the adoption of the strategy.

Resolved: the adoption of the strategy was approved.

105.24 Clerk's Report

Bus stop opp Tincklers Lane - followed up with LCC. This bus stop is currently a 'ghost' stop, without a pole or sign, which is served by local and school bus services: 111, 337, 347, 766, 772, 783, 788 & 810. The Transport Officer for Bus Stops and Shelters is to look into whether a sign is required..

SpID - consultation had been undertaken with properties identified by Lancashire County Council Highways Officers on Langton Brow and Langton Close, in the immediate vicinity of the proposed site. One response had been received offering no objections but suggesting a device for traffic heading out of the village.

106.24 Reports from Outside Bodies

LALC Conference - topics covered included biodiversity, VAT implications, investment and banking facilities, website provision, details of assistance with tree planting and digital mapping.

107.24 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 10 October 2024.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed.

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of **ECCLESTON PARISH COUNCIL (CHORLEY) – LA0071**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2023/24

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

None

3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2024.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

PKF Littlejohn LLP

Date

17/09/2024

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REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL AUDIT

APPENDIX A - Meeting the Standards

Expected Standard	Evidence of Achievement	Response
1. Scope of internal audit	Internal Audit Tests - guidance sheet	
2. Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Internal Auditor has direct access to those charged with governance. ▪ Reports are made in own name to management. ▪ Auditor does not have any other role within the council. 	
3. Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No evidence that internal audit work has not been carried out ethically, with integrity and objectivity. ▪ Responsible officer (Clerk) is consulted on the internal audit plan and on the scope of each audit. 	
4. Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responsibilities for officers and internal audit are defined in relation to internal control, risk management. ▪ The responsibilities of council members are understood; training of members is carried out as necessary. 	
5 Audit Planning and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Internal Audit Plan properly takes account of corporate risk. ▪ The plan has been approved by the council. ▪ Internal Audit has reported in accordance with the plan. 	

APPENDIX B - Characteristics of Effectiveness

Characteristics of effectiveness	Evidence of Achievement	Response
Internal audit work is planned	Planned Internal audit work is based on risk assessment and designed to meet the body's governance assurance needs.	
Understanding the Council's needs and objectives	The annual audit plan demonstrates how audit work will provide assurance in relation to the body's annual governance statement.	
Be seen as a catalyst for change	Supportive role of audit for corporate developments such as corporate governance review, risk management and ethics.	
Add value and assist the Council to achieve its objectives	Demonstrated through positive Council response to recommendations and follow up action where called for.	
Be forward looking	Changes on national agenda are considered when the Internal Audit guidance is reviewed. Internal audit maintains awareness of new developments in the services, risk management and corporate governance.	
Be challenging	Internal audit focuses on risks and encourages managers/members to develop their own responses to risks, rather than relying solely on audit recommendations. The aim of this is to encourage greater ownership of the control environment.	
Ensure the right resources are available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adequate resource is made available for internal audit to complete its work. ▪ Internal auditor understands the body and the legal and corporate framework in which it operates. 	

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INTERNAL AUDITOR TESTING

Internal Control	Suggested test	Response
Proper bookkeeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the cashbook maintained and up to date? ▪ Is the cashbook arithmetic correct? ▪ Is the cashbook regularly balanced? 	
a) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations b) Payment controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has the Council formally adopted standing orders and financial regulations? ▪ Has a Responsible Financial Officer been appointed with specified duties? ▪ Have items or services above a de minimis amount been competitively purchased? ▪ Are payments in the cashbook supported by invoices, authorised and minuted? ▪ Has VAT on payments been identified, recorded and reclaimed? ▪ Is s137 expenditure separately recorded and within statutory limits? 	
Risk management arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does a scan of minutes identify any unusual financial activity? ▪ Do the minutes record the council carrying out an annual risk assessment? ▪ Is insurance cover appropriate and adequate? ▪ Are internal financial controls documented and regularly reviewed? 	
Budgetary controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has the Council prepared an annual budget in support of its precept? ▪ Is actual expenditure against the budget regularly reported to the Council? ▪ Are there any significant unexplained variances from budget? 	
Income controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is income properly recorded and promptly banked? ▪ Does the precept recorded in the cashbook agree to the District Council's notification? ▪ Are security controls over cash adequate and effective? 	 n/a
Petty cash procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is all petty cash spent recorded and supported by VAT invoices/receipts? ▪ Is petty cash expenditure reported to each Council meeting? ▪ Is petty cash reimbursement carried out regularly? 	 n/a
Payroll controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the Council? ▪ Are other payments to the Clerk reasonable and approved by the Council? ▪ Has PAYE/NIC been properly operated by the Council as an employer? 	
Asset controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the Council keep an asset register of all material assets owned? ▪ Are the Asset/Investments registers up to date? ▪ Do asset insurance valuations agree with those in the asset register? 	 n/a
Bank reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is there bank reconciliation for each amount? ▪ Is bank reconciliation carried out regularly on the receipt of statements? ▪ Are there any unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation? 	
Year end procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are year-end accounts prepared on the correct accounting basis (R&P/1&E)? ▪ Do accounts agree with the cash book? ▪ Is there any audit trail from underlying financial records to the accounts? 	