

Preston Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
held on Wednesday 20th May 2026
at 8pm at Village Hall, Preston

Present: Councillors: Sharon Anderson, Julie Buckland, Matt Burleigh, Jane Clark, Ali Morecroft, Helen Page, Margaret Trinder (Chairman)

In attendance: Nine members of public and Lisa Lathane (Clerk & RFO)

1) Apologies: None.

2) Minutes of the 2025 APM:

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 22 May 2025 were approved by members and signed by the Chair.

3) Annual Report

There have been 8 Parish Council Meetings and the Annual Parish Meeting in the last year with an overall attendance of 86% which shows commitment and dedication from members. This is an increase of 4% from last year.

One of the main areas of work for the Parish Council is responding to Planning Applications. This year, from May 2025 to April 2026, we have had 9 applications. This included a planning application and a listed Building Consent application for the same property. The Parish Council responds to all planning applications and often has to ask the planning officer for an extension so that the application can be discussed at a meeting.

The Parish Council continues to liaise with Russell Prince about the plans for Temple Dinsley. When legal agreements have been completed, we expect to hear who the new Business Partner will be to work alongside The Door UK for development of the site.

The Parish Council has recently been informed by Russell Prince that, with the agreement of those funding the Temple Dinsley project, all section 106 monies would be paid soon rather than being staggered throughout the construction process. It is expected that the Parish Council amounts will be available via NHDC in a couple of months.

The lease for the two tennis courts is being prepared. They will be provided by the developer for a peppercorn rent on a 75 year lease for use by the community. The Parish Council has also obtained funding for improvements to the village hall, an activity centre and swings at the Recreation Ground and a roundabout and a picnic area in the Millennium Playground.

The pavilion is a major project for the Parish Council, Preston Cricket Club and the wider community. The Pavilion Working Group has met regularly for a year in order to explore development options for the pavilion, investigate opportunities for increased community use and make recommendations to the Parish Council who make the decisions for the way forward.

The early stages will be funded from Section 106 funding from the Castlefield and Back Lane developments and which are ring fenced by NHDC for the pavilion. The building work will be funded through grant applications and fundraising within the local and wider community.

The community will be informed and consulted at appropriate stages during the life of the project.

A member of the Pavilion Working Group will give a report later in this meeting.

The Parish Council obtained funding from the Castlefield, Back Lane and Temple Dinsley developments to install more play equipment in Church Meadow. The Parish Council rents Church Meadow from NHDC so before any work could begin, a new lease had to be agreed. This took considerable time but has now been completed so the Parish Council has been able to liaise with the contractor about the details of the equipment, some of which will be accessible for children with special needs. We hope to finalise the details soon.

The community will be informed when installation is taking place as the playground will be closed to ensure everyone's safety.

The village hall is owned by the Parish Council and managed by the Village Hall committee. This arrangement means that the Chairman of the Parish Council is automatically an ex-officio member of the Village Hall committee. In this capacity, I have been supporting the village hall committee for the last 2 years, following the closure of Preston Nursery School in 2024 and the death last year of Jenny Murray who had been on the Village Hall committee for 24 years and Chairman since 2006. With the pre-school in the village hall on weekdays in term time and more bookings coming in, the hall and the committee are now in a better position so I will gradually become less involved. Lisa will remain a member of the committee and will continue to be administrator of the booking system.

The Parish Council is grateful to the many volunteers who work hard and often unnoticed in a variety of ways:

- Litter picking, organised twice a year by The Preston Trust.
- The VETS volunteers for emergency calls for the defibrillator at the Red Lion
- The Community Drive Safe Volunteers, especially the lead volunteers, who have to organise the sessions and collect and return the equipment to Lilley.
- Pam Biggs, not a Preston resident, who continues to organise maintenance of the defibrillators at the Red Lion and the pavilion.

I am very grateful to Lisa, our Clerk, who is also Responsible Financial Officer, for all her work and support this year. I am grateful too for the support and commitment of all the Parish Councillors in the last busy year.

The Parish Council is a corporate body which makes decisions as a whole. Individual members are not able to make decisions. None of the initiatives and activities I have described here could take place without everyone playing their part and contributing to the democratic decision-making process. The decisions taken by the Parish Council are what it believes to be in the best interests of the wider community at that particular time.

The Parish Council will continue to work for the benefit of Preston residents in the next year to the best of its abilities.

4) Treasurer's Report

At the start of the 2025/26 financial year the Parish Council had funds of £91,313 which were later supplemented by income of £24,728, the largest part of which was the precept of £16,759. We also received £2400 from reclaiming VAT from the previous financial year. Also paid to the parish council was £3653.08 from Preston Cricket Club as their share of utility bills and repairs made to the pavilion.

A payment of £1380 was made to repair damage caused by tractors and lorries to the verge along School Lane. We spent £1,618 on grass cutting in the village, plus £350 donated to the church for the cutting of grass in the churchyard. We spent £450 on pond maintenance this year, ensuring it remains an attractive spot in the village.

At the end of the financial year the Parish Council had £89,265 in the bank. The majority of this amount is ring-fenced for specific future projects.

5) Reports from County and District Councillors

A report from District Councillor Joe Graziano was read out by the Clerk.

6) Police Report

None.

7) Reports by Local Organisations

The following organisations addressed the meeting in person:

Neighbourhood Watch
Friends of St Martin's Church
Preston Cricket Club

The Preston Trust
Village Hall Committee
The Red Lion
The Pavilion Working Group
Preston Village Pre-School

The following organisations sent reports to be read to the meeting:

Preston Primary School
Preston Village Society

8) Open Forum

- A member of the public thanked the council for cutting back vegetation in Chequers Lane.
- A member of public asked about the possible 20mph speed limit. The Chair informed the meeting that initial speed tests have been carried out by Highways, we are awaiting the outcome.
- A member of the public commented on overgrown hedges from the entrance to Temple Dinsley to the St Albans Highway. The Chair will liaise with Russell Prince to request the hedges are cut back.
- A member of the public asked about trees and hedges on Church Lane which in their view is creating a blind spot for drivers.
- Councillor Clark noted that there were issues with vegetation opposite The Chequers.
- A question was asked as to when Fibre Broadband will be brought to the village. The parish council will make enquiries.
- A member of public raised concerns about the safety of the junction towards Little Almshoe. There have been a number of accidents there in recent weeks. The parish council will liaise with Cllr David Barnard on the matter.

10) Date and time of next ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: Thursday 21st May 2026.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.