

BRINDLE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 14 July 2025, at 7:30pm, at Brindle Community Hall, Water Street, Brindle, PR6 8NH

Present: Councillor Darren Cranshaw (Chair)
Councillor Louise Croasdale (Vice Chair)
Councillor John Baldwin
Councillor Jane Greenway
Councillor Pauline McGovern
Councillor Bill Nelson
Councillor Barbara Robinson
Councillor Cath Singleton
Councillor John Swann

In attendance: Dianne Scambler (Clerk)

3 Members of the public

43. Apologies and announcements

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Jane Greenway.

The Chair advised the Council about the submission of the Central Lancashire Local Plan and confirmed that the Council's Certificate of Exemption had been submitted in accordance with its Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) obligations.

44. Adjournment: Public Participation

Councillor John Swann spoke on behalf of residents who had raised concerns regarding ongoing activities at Brewerth Manor. The property owner had previously submitted several retrospective planning applications for developments on his house and garden, all of which were refused by Chorley Council. These refusals were upheld by the Planning Inspectorate, which concluded that certain unauthorised works must be reversed—specifically, the reversion of land from domestic garden use back to its original designation as agricultural land.

Despite these rulings, residents reported that the land continues to be maintained as a garden, with regular mowing in direct contravention of the enforcement conditions. In addition, residents shared photographs at the meeting showing extensive mowing and the recent erection of a seven-foot fence along the boundary of their property, further exacerbating concerns.

Parish Councillor McGovern, who also serves as a District Councillor, committed to raising the issue with Chorley Council's Planning Team and reporting back to the affected residents. The Chair also pledged to liaise directly with the Council to ensure that enforcement action is properly followed up and that residents are kept informed of any developments.

45. Disclosure of personal or prejudicial interests

Councillor Cranshaw declared a personal interest in Items 6 and 7.

46. Minutes

The minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on Monday 9 June 2025, were agreed as a true and correct record for signing by the Chair.

47. Police Liaison

The newly appointed Clerk had contacted the designated Police representative to introduce herself and seek an update on previously reported issues. A response is currently awaited.

The Council considered a report of a concerning incident involving mopeds being driven recklessly around the village by young individuals. Observations included instances of three riders on a single vehicle, none wearing helmets, and travelling at dangerously high speeds. It was confirmed that clear CCTV footage had been obtained, and that liaison with community police officers was underway to support appropriate follow-up action.

Councillor Robinson informed the Council that she had recently intervened in an attempted theft of stone flags in the village, having witnessed the perpetrators in the act and promptly reporting the incident to the police. Thanks to her swift action, the individuals were subsequently apprehended in a neighbouring village.

The Council discussed the importance of encouraging residents to remain vigilant, particularly in light of a recent spate of similar incidents in the area. It was agreed that raising awareness and promoting community alertness would be key in helping to deter further criminal activity.

48. Brindle Community Hall

Councillor Cranshaw informed the Council that the Hall is scheduled to be repainted over the summer months. Financially, the Hall is performing well and has recently welcomed a new community group to its list of regular users.

Councillor McGovern, who attended the most recent meeting in an observational capacity, echoed Councillor Cranshaw's positive remarks. She also noted some ongoing challenges around volunteer capacity, with a small group of individuals consistently taking on most of the responsibilities. The Council acknowledged the importance of encouraging broader community involvement to support the Hall's continued success.

49. Lancashire Association of Local Councils Report

The Chair informed the Council of an upcoming Extraordinary Meeting of the Lancashire Association of Local Councils (LALC), scheduled for 12 August. The purpose of the meeting is to review the revised Constitution, which has been

amended to ensure it remains fit for purpose considering the ongoing local government reorganisation. The revisions aim to strengthen transparency, accountability, and alignment with current governance standards.

The Council were informed of the recent publication of the Government's analysis on remote meetings and proxy voting, which has prompted renewed discussion around the potential adoption of hybrid meeting arrangements.

Councillor McGovern welcomed the possibility of such changes, noting that hybrid meetings offer greater accessibility, particularly for individuals with hearing impairments or other challenges that make in-person attendance more difficult. She emphasised that remote participation could help ensure inclusivity and broader engagement in Council business.

However, the Chair highlighted several practical considerations, including the financial cost of implementing hybrid systems and the need to carefully assess technical, legal, and procedural parameters before any changes could be adopted. It was also noted that, within Lancashire, only Chorley and South Ribble District Councils currently offer hybrid meeting facilities, suggesting that such arrangements are not yet widely established at the local level.

The Council agreed to monitor developments and consider the feasibility of hybrid meetings in the future, balancing accessibility with operational practicality.

It was announced that nominations for the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Annual Awards are now open. The Clerk will circulate details of the available award categories to all Members, with a view to identifying any areas in which the Council's work may be eligible for recognition.

The Council noted Lancashire County Council's offer of Internal Auditor training.

50. Chorley Borough Council/Lancashire County Council Update

Councillor McGovern advised that the first full Council meeting of Chorley Council was taking place that week.

51. Planning Reports

The meeting discussed recent planning applications with no observations made.

52. Parish Finance

The Clerk is currently progressing the process of updating account signatories and authorised users with the Co-operative Bank. In the interim, the Council will continue to settle any outstanding payments and future expenditure through the use of cheques until the changes are fully implemented.

53. Accounts for Payment

The Council approved the following payments:

- Whitehead and Aldridge Accountants £108.00
- Dianne Scambler (Locum Clerk) £150.00
- Dianne Scambler (Contractual June Salary) £264.00
- HMRC £66.00
- Gallaghers (AJG Community Schemes renewal) £466.50
- LALC (Conference place – Cllr D Cranshaw) £50.00

- Brindle Community Hall – (Room hire for June and July) £40.00
- Brindle Village Show (Grant) £175.00
- Friends of Finnington (Contribution) £200.00

The Clerk informed the Council that a grant request had been submitted on behalf of the Brindle Over 55's Club. It was agreed that the request would be circulated to all Council Members for review, with formal consideration to take place at a future meeting.

54. Environmental Issues and Concerns

Nothing raised.

55. Parish Council Projects

The Clerk was scheduled to meet with the Council Officer overseeing the Withnell Fold Walk project, which is being supported through the Neighbourhood Grant. The Council advised that further details, such as the proposed route and the specific type of stiles required, would be necessary before appropriate quotations could be obtained for the works.

56. Closure of Brindle St Joseph's Church and Parish Hall

The Chair reported that the newly appointed Archbishop had engaged in discussions with the Abbot of Ampleforth, and that the tone of these conversations had been positive. It was noted that the concerns of parishioners appeared to be heard, and there was growing optimism regarding a favourable resolution—particularly in relation to the continued use of the Parish Hall.

Councillor McGovern confirmed her intention to speak with Sir Lindsay Hoyle, having already made an initial request to arrange a meeting. Councillor Robinson, who had not been present at the previous two meetings, requested an update on the matter. It was agreed that all relevant documentation, including the most recent letter of response, would be re-circulated for her review.

Councillor Robinson also noted that she has a family connection to the Pope's office in Rome and offered to make contact to seek informal advice or guidance on the matter.

57. Litter picking

It was agreed that this initiative would be aligned with the Annual National Great British Spring Clean, typically held in March. By coordinating efforts with this national litter-picking event, the Council aims to maximise community engagement and visibility. All interested parties, including residents, community groups, and partner organisations, will be invited to participate in the campaign.

58. Scarecrow Festival

The Chair informed the Council that a Scarecrow Festival was being organised to take place on Saturday 20 September 2025. The Council agreed for use of the Parish Pound to display some of the Scarecrows.

59. Alms Houses

The Chair informed the Council that William de Hamel had decided to convert the cottages at High Cop into Alms houses. Members expressed a strong preference for

ensuring that residents with longstanding ties to the village would be prioritised in any future allocation process.

60. Cold War Bunker

The Council were informed that William de Hamel was in the process of transferring ownership of the Cold War Bunker to a Community Interest Company (CIC), which would be responsible for preserving and showcasing the site to the public, with the aim of safeguarding the historical asset for future generations.

However, William de Hamel also requested that the Parish Council consider assuming ownership of the site in the event that the CIC is unable to sustain its operations. This proposal prompted a range of views among Members, reflecting both the significance of the site and the potential long-term responsibilities involved.

Following a detailed discussion, it was agreed that a site visit would be arranged to allow Members to assess the condition and viability of the asset firsthand. A final decision will be made at a future meeting, once all relevant information has been considered.

61. Date of next meeting

Monday 8, September 2025, at Brindle Community Hall commencing at 7.30pm.

The meeting ended at 9.25pm