

# MINUTES OF PILLING'S ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2022 AT 7.00 PM

*Present:*                      *Councillors; J. Savage, Chairman,*  
   *Mrs. E. Cookson,*  
   *N. Cookson,*  
   *G. Curwen,*  
   *Mrs. J. Judkins*  
   *E. Moorat,*  
   *P. McWhirter,*  
   *S. Phillpotts*  
   *A. Whiteside*  
   *Gillian Benson, Clerk to the Parish Council*  
   *Wyre Cllr. G. Holden*

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were sent from Cllr. J. Barton

## **2. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL MEETING**

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021, having been circulated were agreed and signed as a true record. Meeting was postponed due to the death of the Duke of Edinburgh.

*Resolved; The Chairman signed the minutes.*

## **3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There were no matters raised from the minutes.

## **4. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN**

Twelve months ago, we were beginning to emerge from the cloistered life thrust upon us by the pandemic and despite the Omicron variant which caused a slight derailing of progress, we are (with the help of the vaccine) starting to return to a more 'normal' life.

However, there are still many things that are still with us; we went into the first lockdown with the closure of Taylors Lane due to problems with the sewers and it beggars' belief that two years on we have another closure and a piecemeal approach to solving the problem. We are told that lack of funding prevents the job being completed at one go but when you consider how much has been spent over the past two years that money would probably go a long way towards funding the whole job.

There are not only problems under the roads, but there are also difficulties on the roads with respect to safety. The Lancaster Road/Amenity Area corner continues to see a number of accidents, indeed the A588 is frequently quoted as one of the most dangerous roads in the country. Whether the scheme to track vehicle speeds from Lancaster through to the end of Shard Bridge will have any effect on accident numbers remains to be seen.

In addition, the surfaces of some roads in the parish leave a lot to be desired and no doubt contribute to some of the problems. While it is true to say that the parish council is able to influence district and county councils in areas that are in need of work, it does sometimes appear that Pilling has a low priority compared to some places and therefore, our pleas are not noted.

Pilling has, despite the sea wall, still suffered from flooding, so the idea that an inter tidal lagoon be created that would look at the way in which land can be used for storage during high tide to allow breathing space before releasing the water to the sea is worthy of consideration. Accordingly, a working party will be set up facilitated by the parish council to consider this proposal.

While the parish council works on behalf of residents to develop and enhance facilities, there are times when residents need to play their part. An increase in dog fouling (and the refusal to pick up after dogs) has been noted; in addition, there is a responsibility of landowners to make sure their dykes and ditches are cleared. Only if everyone does this can water run freely thus avoiding build up and flooding. While the parish council can speak to landowners and if necessary refer cases to district and county councils, it should be understood that we do not have powers to force work to be done. This remit lies with higher authorities.

Our Pilling in Bloom team ably led by our lengthsman Stan have worked tirelessly to show the village off to best advantage and it is pleasing to note that their efforts were rewarded with second place in the Best Kept Village Competition and a Gold Award in Wyre in Bloom. In my report last year, I mentioned the completion of the new village hall and my hope that it would be a focus to bring people together as we moved out of restrictions. I can only say that my hopes have been surpassed; the hall has been open for just under a year to major acclaim both for the building and for the facilities that it provides. Many new activities are taking place in the hall and as we move into June it will be the centre of four days of celebration to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee of our Queen Elizabeth II. This will include an afternoon tea to replace the Senior Citizens party which had to be cancelled due to omicron. It will be yet another occasion when the people of Pilling can come together as a community to remember and to celebrate.

Seeing your community change for the better as a result of decisions you have helped make, is something that can give you a sense of pride and achievement. This is what we strive to do as councillors, and in leading the council, I am grateful for the support of my fellow councillors, our lengthsman Stan and our clerk Gillian.

John Savage  
Chairman, Pilling Parish Council.  
*Resolved: The report was accepted.*

## **5. REPORT FROM THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER**

### **Responsible Financial Officer, 2022**

Carried forward:		Year end:
Nat West:	£5,571.46	£12,642.93
Furness Building Society:	<u>£23,781.99</u>	<u>£44,233.73</u>
	£29,353.45	£56,876.66

### **Income:**

The impact of the Covid pandemic has affected everyone and Councillors did not wish to put further burden on residents by raising the precept, but it became necessary to increase by £3,000. The Parish Council has supported the work of Pilling Village Hall; in the final construction months the committee appealed for funds to complete the build. £49,000 was loaned from the Reserve Account. The Village Hall will repay the loan from yearend balances. The Reserve Account being recouped through the precept.

Pilling in Bloom, who use the Parish Council's financial facilities, raised an extraordinary amount in sponsorship, thanks wholly to the tireless efforts of Stan Raby. These include both local and surrounding businesses, Wyre Council and local residents. The Parish Council is rightly proud of his diligence when, with his team, planted up the village and extended areas of floral displays. This resulted in a RHS North West in Bloom Gold Award, the ceremony was held in Pilling Village Hall by Wyre Council, who were delighted with the facilities.

The bank interest is pitiful at this time, £1.69 and due to an increase in transaction amounts, the bank will be charging. As a result, a new bank is being sought. Funds are transferred into the Reserve Account to attract interest, £77 this year. The Parish Champion grant was used to provide office furniture in the new Pilling Village Hall office to be used a base for the Parish Clerk. The Over 60's Party was again cancelled due to the pandemic, there was a donation, to be used towards the Jubilee Afternoon Tea for our older residents in June.

The Parish Council's ground maintenance contracts include At. John's Church and Pilling Chapel graveyards, Lancashire County Council grass verges, and Lune Valley Housing. Cllr. Mrs. Judy Judkins was successful in applying for Community Arts Projects and Heritage Walks grant from the Lottery for £9,300

#### **Expenditure:**

Staff costs increased due to a last-minute wage settlement notified in March 2022 and back dated to April 2021. Pilling in Bloom has undertaken an expansion of floral beds and plants needed to fill them. Christmas tree lights were purchased for the new tree located at Stakepool Stores. The Pilling Newsletter saw two prints and the first for two years. There have been marginal increases in insurance, audit and subscription costs. Councillors took advantage of the new training courses offered by Lancashire Association of Local Councils.

Gillian Benson,  
Responsible Financial Officer, Pilling Parish Council  
*Resolved: The report was accepted.*

## **6. REPORTS**

### **Wyre Councillor Holden**

Cllr. Holden announced he will not be standing in next year's elections and has had no response from Carl Green about draining Pilling.

### **Pilling in Bloom Annual Report 2021**

Britain in Bloom is a year-round competition organised by the Royal Horticultural Society. Pilling competes on a regional level with Wyre Borough Council.

In Pilling we have taken part for many years and the amazing work that has been done has played a big part in improving our community and the local environment.

In 2021 Stan, with the help of some residents, has created some colourful displays around the village using repurposed agricultural objects and lots of new planters.

Some highlights of Stan's work in 2021:

- A wildflower area was created on Back Sands Lane, to be extended this year.
- Increased the use of peat free compost
- Encouraged more people to get involved in taking care of planters
- Managed verges and formal planting differently so that they benefit pollinators, insects and non-vertebrates, helping to reduce the loss of habitats and restore balance.

- Followed Plantlife advice on differential cutting of verges and hedges
- Secured more funding from local businesses and received generous donations from people in the village.
- Repaired raised beds in the sensory and community garden
- Ditches have been cleared regularly to ensure that the verges can drain well. The spoil is left at the side of the verge, and we have seen that this bare soil has helped seed germination.

**The village gained a Gold Award.** Congratulations and many thanks to Stan.  
Report by Cllr. Mrs. J. Judkins

### **Best Kept Village and Pilling Pickers**

Cllr. Mrs. J. Judkins reported that Pilling enters the Best Kept Village competition every year and this year we reached the final stage of the competition.

Stan attended the information sessions and did an excellent job cleaning signposts and street furniture, clearing ditches, removing litter and ensuring paths and verges are not obstructed. The assessment also includes private property and commercial buildings so making good relationships with residents has helped to ensure the village looks it's best. Stan is well respected and has good support with this

There's a lot of work involved in keeping the village looking good as there has been an increase in fly tipping and litter along many our roads.

We've established a small team, Pilling Pickers who regularly collect litter. They have equipment on loan from Wyre Council and follow guidelines to keep them safe whilst out and about.

### **Pilling Community Arts Hub now Pilling Community Action**

The Parish Council has been awarded £9,300 from the Lottery Fund - Awards for All. This project embraces art, culture, nature and our local heritage.

The project focuses on factors that have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing – nature, creativity, exercise and friendship. Workshops will include nature walks, creative workshops, upcycling, community gardening and digital art.

The workshops are inclusive and will encourage everyone to get involved, learn something new, be creative, make social connections and have fun. They will be low cost or free to the participants. I have met with local artists with experience of community-based arts projects. The workshops will begin later this year and include upcycling, yarn crafts etc.

Report by Cllr. Mrs. J. Judkins

### **Pilling Village Hall**

Cllr. P. McWhirter reported the new Village Hall has been open for 12 months in June, both the bar and café are doing well. The Committee Room now has a TV and a screen for the main hall, it is hired out most nights by residents and surrounding areas.

### **8. MATTERS RAISED BY RESIDENTS**

There were no residents attending.

*There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.20p.m.*

Date .....

Chairman .....

***The next annual meeting of the Parish Council will be held on  
Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023.***