**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CROSTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**WEDNESDAY 9 JULY 2025 6.30pm, CROSTON OLD SCHOOL**

***All decisions are unanimous unless otherwise stated***

*Councillors are asked to provide the Clerk with amendments in writing one week prior, as they will not be considered at the meeting due to time limitations*

**In attendance:** Councillors C Turner, Chair, P Sloan, C Titherington-Teale, C Baines, J Wright, W Tomlinson, K Almond, K Taylor, Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer; three members of the public

1. **Apologies for absence**: None
2. **Minutes of the meeting held 18 June 2025**:

Signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record. Cllr Almond queried minute 8.c stating there was no reference made Northern Rail. The Clerk advised it was noted in the Minute Book. The enquirer had been informed no suitable location could be offered on Parish Council owned land.

1. **Matters arising from the minutes, unless on the agenda:**
* **Improvement of Footpath 6 from The Orchard to Out Lane:** Cllr Wright had written to LCC Public Rights of Way to enquire about an on-site meeting. Cllr Almond suggested the number of children using the footpath be ascertained from Bishop Rawstorne and Trinity schools. **Cllr Wright agreed to provide the information for Bishop Rawstorne, subject to the Business Manager’s agreement**.
* **Peartree council garages:** Cllr Alan Platt advised Catherine Jagger, Estates Surveyor, Chorley Council has asked for an update on the garage review.
1. **Declarations of Interest**: Councillors to declare any personal or pecuniary interest in respect of matters on the agenda or up to any point in the meeting: None
2. **Public Time**: To invite / listen to matters raised by members of the public
* **Croston Village Festivities Group (CVFG)**

Bevis Mulholland gave an oral presentation on the work of the CVFG, which had applied for a grant of £500. If approved, Bevis explained how the grant would contribute towards Croston’s, very popular December festivities.

* **Road Safety**

Trace Judge expressed her concerns about road safety on Grape Lane and the number of near misses by speeding traffic along sections of the road. Cllr Tomlinson advised he is in contact with LCC’s Road Safety team regarding the cost and location of SPIDs to be in strategic locations in Croston. **Resolved: An article to be posted on the website to gain data by seeking feedback from residents about road safety and the number of near misses. Resolved: The Clerk contact Lancashire Constabulary’s Croston Police Officer to ask for attendance at a future meeting.**

* **Neighbourhood Plan**

Susan Duckworth had expressed her concerns about planning permission in Croston. The Clerk had written to Ms Duckworth to advise it is not a legal requirement and the Parish Council is not compelled to have a plan. Ms Duckworth referred to comments made by Councillor Craige Southern in correspondence to her, suggesting he had advised the Parish Council to develop a neighbourhood plan, as this would add weight to any potential planning applications submitted to Chorley Council. **Resolved: The Chair will speak to the Chair of Bretherton Parish Council as a benchmarking exercise and ascertain information on their neighbourhood plan so the Parish Council could consider a plan for Croston.**

1. **Correspondence**
2. **Red Admiral Hymn and March Contest**

Thanks were expressed to the Parish Council for permitting use of the Village Green on 29 June 2025 to host their annual event, which had been well attended and had received lots of positive feedback. They also requested use of the village green again in 2026, which was agreed in principle. **Resolved: The Clerk to ascertain the date.**

1. **Pride Flag**

Nine members of the public has expressed their appreciation to the Parish Council for flying the Pride flag for the month of June.

1. **Junction of Turflands / Carr Lane**

The Clerk advised an onsite meeting had been arranged between County Councillor Mark Wade and Alison and Nick Harding to discuss road safety at the junction. **Resolved: Cllrs Tomlinson and Almond would attend. Subsequently, the owner of Croston Hall Farm was invited to attend so all stakeholders were present.**

1. **Grants to Voluntary Organisations**

Resolved this item be deferred to September due to the evaluation of available funds in the budget. **Resolved: The Clerk will write to applicants to advise.**

1. **Planning matters**
* 25/00615/FULHH: The Willows, Grape Lane, Croston; single storey extension following demolition of existing conservatory.
* 25/00550/FULHH: 4 Farmhouse Court, Croston; erection of shed, following demolition of existing shed (retrospective).
* 25/00574/CLEUD: Finney Lane Farm, Finney Lane, Croston; application for a certificate of lawfulness for the exiting use of 5 no buildings for residential purposes.
* 25/00559/TCON: 10 Rectory Close, Croston; application forks to a tree within conservation area prune and fell.
* Councillor Alan Platt advised the planning application for six properties to be built on Bretherton Road, was approved. Grey Belt refers to certain areas within the Green Belt that are deemed to make a limited contribution to the Green Belt and may be considered for development. These areas often feature previously development land or, are significantly surrounded by built-up areas and the development could address the UK’s housing shortage.
* The Central Lancashire Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary for State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on 30 June.

**9. Financial matters**

1. The Clerk’s claim for June 2025 was approved.
2. The Acting Clerk’s claim for May & June 2025 was approved.
3. The financial monitoring statement for the first quarter of 2025/26 was approved.
4. Payments to approve:
* Lee Distribution, distribute Chair’s letter £58.50
* Printwise; print Chair’s letter £160.00
* Croston Old School; room hire £37.50
* LALC Conference; Chair’s attendance £50.00
* \*Countrywide Estates: payment for May, June and July £3450.00

\*As no formal Contract exists with Countrywide, the Clerk requested a quote for work to be undertaken in 2025/26, which was £8050 + VAT. Options for additional work had been included. **Resolved: Countrywide to undertake grounds maintenance until 31 March 2026; the Clerk will obtain quotes prior to this from three providers, for 2026/27 and annually thereafter.**

e. The financial transactions for June were approved.

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| DATE | PAYEE | DESCRIPTION | £ |
| 02 Jun 2025 | Direct Debit Easy Websites | Website subscription  | 36.96 |
| 04 Jun 2025 | Direct Debit Chorley BC | Annual Garden Waste bin  | 40.00 |
| 23 Jun 2025 | Employee 4 | Pay tax mth 3 | 895.47 |
| 23 Jun 2025 | Employee 4  | Expenses / travel tax mth 3 | 59.35 |
| 27 Jun 2025 | OPSTA  | Subscription renewal | 10.00 |
| 27 Jun 2025 | Amanda Partington | Internal Audit fee | 175.00 |
| 27 Jun 2025 | RHF Landscapes | Essential Park repairs - bark | 854.63 |
| 30 Jun 2025 | Service Charge | Bank | 6.00 |

1. **Forward Plan**

Following the resolution on 18 June 2025for the Parish Council to develop an annual forward plan, resident feedback will be sought on road safety, parking and communication, as these themes appear to be the most reported concerns at Parish Council meetings and in correspondence with the Clerk. The Forward Plan needs engagement with key stakeholders, e.g. Lancashire Constabulary, Lancashire County Council, Chorley Council, Paul Foster, MP. **Resolved: The Clerk will post an item on the website asking for feedback on these matters.**

Cllr Tomlinson provided progress on a replacement notice board at Morrisons and advised the business is leased. Cllr Tomlinson had contacted Brian Hunt, the Property Manager for McColls for a conversation.

1. **CIL Priorities**

The Clerk advised the CIL payment was expected on 28 October. **Resolved: The Parish Council will consider plans at the September meeting.**

1. **Flag Flying Policy** – deferred to September
2. **Pan-Lancashire Pharmacies Consultation**

The Clerk had emailed information on 4 July to the Parish Council on the consultation process and had added an item to the website / notice boards. Cllr Titherington-Teale to publish on social media.

1. **Reports from other organisations:** None
2. **Any urgent business**
* **Potential By-election**

The Clerk explained the process should a by-election be called by ten+ residents. This will cost the Parish Council c£10,000, to be met from the parish precept; this is the sum added to the council tax bill for each resident in Croston. It was noted signatories for a by-election may not fully understand the significant, financial impact this will have on the residents of Croston. The magnitude of calling by-election is considerable and consequential, as the Parish Council will have to consider if some services will be reduced and / or removed. It is extremely likely the precept / council tax will be raised to retrospectively fund the by-election, which will affect all Croston residents.

* **Parish Council meeting venue**

To reduce expenditure, Cllr Tomlinson asked the Parish Council to consider alternative venues for parish council meetings. It was agreed the acoustics in the Old School are not good and prohibited productive conversation, as well as no parking. Alternative providers, ideally free of charge, would be sourced. A decision by email would be taken on this occasion, which may change the parish council meeting venue from September onwards. Should any licensed premises offer a complimentary venue, this is acceptable in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, that there are no alternative venues free or at a reasonable cost. **Resolved: Cllr Tomlinson to investigate an alternative, free meeting venue** **and consult parish councillors.**

* **Public meeting re: flooding**

Paul Foster, MP, will hold a public meeting on Friday 25 July @ 3pm at The Old School, to provide information to residents on his conversations with United Utilities and The Environment Agency.

* **Improving communication**

To improve communication with residents, the website had been refreshed, and Cllr Tomlinson asked Parish Councillors to view and offer feedback.

* **Cyber security**

Cllr Tomlinson provided the costs to utilise gov.uk email addresses. This has been strongly recommended by LALC / NALC to meet future audit requirements. James Reilly, Easy Websites will attend the 2 September meeting to give a presentation on gov.uk email addresses and configure personal devices. Social media links to be added to the website. **Resolved: The parish council will migrate and interface to gov.uk email addresses from September. Councillors should bring personal devices to the September meeting so gov.uk email addresses can be added.**

* **The Crown pub**

Cllr Baines asked what the future of The Crown pub is, which no one was aware. **Resolved: Cllr Baines will contact the owners, the Co-Op, to ascertain plans for the site.**

1. **Date of next meeting: 3 September 6.30pm – venue TBA**

Prepared by Karon Taylor, Clerk to Croston Parish Council: [www.crostonparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.crostonparishcouncil.org.uk)

Signed Chair Date